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百鬼夜行抄 ②

Hyakkiyakou Show
Selected Fragments

今市子

ichiko IMA

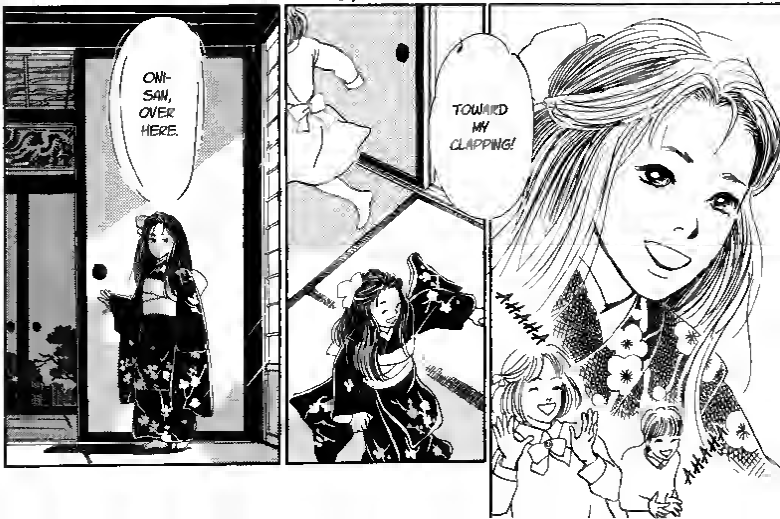


The Blindfolded Oni

*English equivalent rock paper scissors



*oni similar to Western ogre




TOWARD MY CLAP-PING...
GRAB
AH!
NO! HELP ME!
RITSU!
NO...
LET GO!


A DREAM?
IT WAS WHEN GRANDPA WAS STILL ALIVE... AND I WAS DRESSED AS A GIRL.
I MUST HAVE BEEN 3 OR 4.
FRIGHTENING. WHY DO I STILL DREAM ABOUT MY CHILDHOOD?
I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY.
WE WERE ALL PLAYING A GAME.
THERE WERE A LOT OF KIDS THERE.

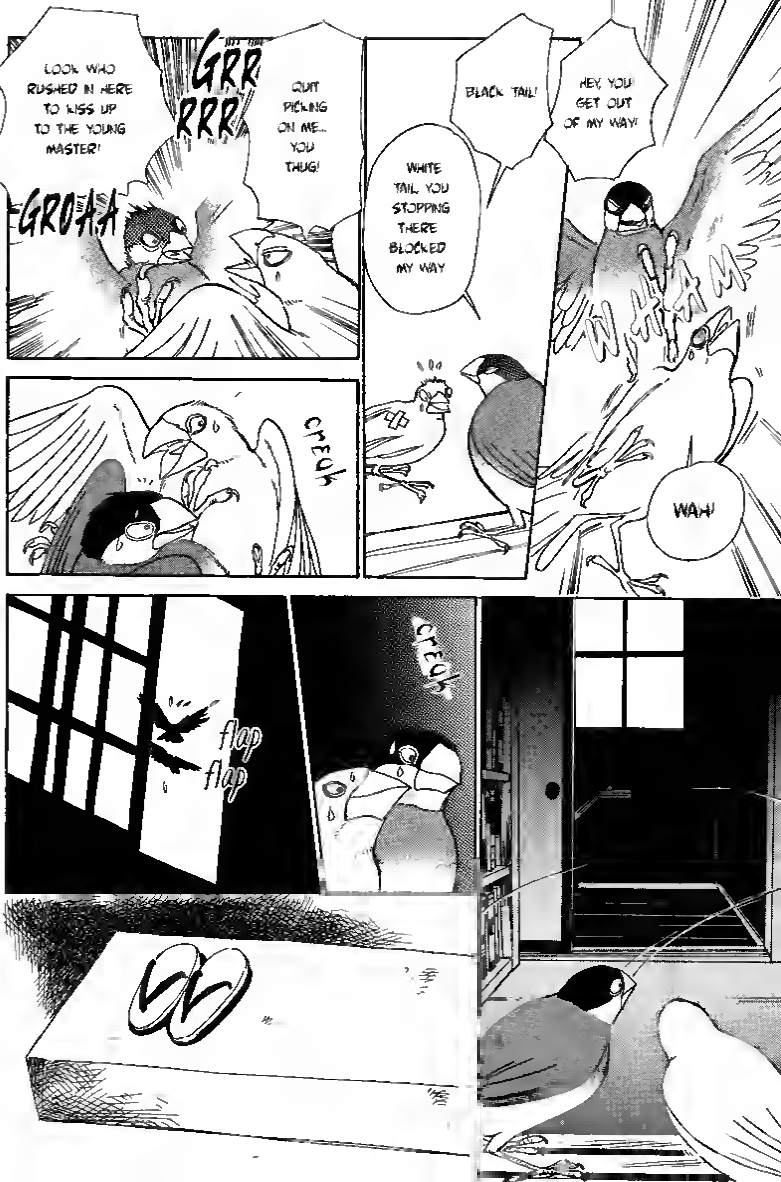

MY GRANDFATHER HAD CERTAIN POWERS. BECAUSE OF THAT, STRANGE THINGS STILL HAPPEN AT OUR HOUSE
BY NOW, I'M USED TO ALL SORTS OF WEIRD PHENOMENA.
MOM, I'LL TAKE IT
I'M SCARED OF YOUR MOTHER.
MY FATHER DIED OF A HEART ATTACK WHEN I WAS 5 YEARS OLD
THIS IS ONE OF THEM.
DAD, YOUR DINNER!
SHE PROBABLY WON'T COOK FOR ME ANYMORE
OF COURSE DEMONS DON'T WORK.
THIS IS A DEMON NAMED BLUE STORM WHO IS INHABITING MY REAL FATHER'S BODY
SHE IS KAGYUU'S DAUGHTER, SO SHE PROBABLY HAS SOME SPIRITUAL SENSE
IF SHE FINDS OUT I'M A DEMON...


MY GRANDMOTHER MADE IT FOR ME
WOW! A KIMONO WHAT'S THE OCCASION?
HI-CHAN! KANA-CHAN!
TO SUPPORT THE HOUSEHOLD, MOM AND GRANDMA HOLD TEA CEREMONY, FLOWER ARRANGING, AND KIMONO CLASSES.
KANA-CHAN!
OH, HI-CHAN! ARE YOU ON YOUR WAY TO IIJIMA-SENSEI'S HOUSE? LET'S GO TOGETHER
NOT BAD, HI-CHAN YOUR GRAND-MOTHER HAS GOOD TASTE.
clatter clatter
I DECIDED TO WEAR A KIMONO TODAY, TOO!
AH...
HI-CHAN, THE PATTERN ON YOUR KIMONO IS REALLY PRETTY!
DAMN...
I SENSE A SPIRIT
WE'RE HERE!


*Ojama shimasu in Japanese text. Polite response to being welcomed into a home.
Please excuse our intrusion.*
HELLO, EVERYONE. PLEASE COME IN
SO MANY KIMONOS SO CUTE!
STOMP STOMP
OH, NO EVERY-ONE'S ALREADY INSIDE.
Oh— Is that Sensei's son? So big already!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WELL, SINCE YOU'RE HERE, YOU CAN JOIN THE CLASS!
OUCH
Hee Hee
Hee
SIX PEOPLE SITTING TOGETHER MAKES IT QUITE CROWDED
Sheesh... I'm a high school student
OK THEN, LET'S BEGIN
RITSU! SIT UP STRAIGHT!
WHO IS IT?
WHICH ONE OF THEM?


IT'S GOT TO BE ONE OF THEM...
Damn it Go away!
SO EMBARRASSING! EVERYONE PRETEND YOU DIDN'T SEE THAT DON'T TELL ANYBODY THAT THE SON OF THE TEA CEREMONY SENSEI CAN'T SIT PROPERLY!!
THUD
AHHHHHH
AAH MY LEGS
THANK YOU SENSEI
THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY
I STILL DIDN'T FIND OUT WHO IT IS
...HE'S AN ONLY SON!
hahaha
another chapter
GOOD-BYE, EVERY-ONE!
BYE SENSEI
THANK YOU SENSEI
SEE YOU NEXT WEEK
HI-CHAN
OK SEE YOU NEXT TIME
Bye!
HMM?
AHHHHH
I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE HAS SUCH A GROWN-UP SON!
DO YOU WANT TO GO SOME-WHERE NOW?


OH NO...
AH, PLEASE COME IN
HELLO
Creak
IT DIDN'T LEAVE WITH THE REST OF THE CLASS?
THE NEXT CLASS HAS ARRIVED RITSU, COME AND HELP
IS SOMEONE STILL HERE?
ST...ANGE...
Flap Flap
BUT IF HE'S NOT HERE...
I WANTED TO SEE IF HE HAD ANY ORDERS FOR ME
HMM... NOT HERE?
YOUNG MASTER!
Flap Flap


LOOK WHO RUSHED IN HERE TO KISS UP TO THE YOUNG MASTER!
GRR RRR
QUIT PICKING ON ME... YOU THUG!
GROAA
BLACK TAIL!
HEY YOU! GET OUT OF MY WAY!
WHITE TAIL YOU STOPPING THERE BLOCKED MY WAY
WAAM
WAH!
CHEEK
CHEEK
flap flap


IT'S STILL IN THE HOUSE.
'WHO WENT HOME WITH BARE FEET?'
NEXT WEEK I'LL ASK THEM,
Ha ha ha Very funny
THAT'S WEIRD NO ONE EVER CAME AND GOT THE SANDALS.
YOU MEAN SOMEONE WENT HOME BARE-FOOTED?
SEEMS LIKE SOMEONE HASN'T GONE HOME.
IT'S THE ONE THAT STUDENT WAS WEARING.
THE PATTERN OF THAT KIMONO...


I JUST SAW HER. SHE WAS WEARING A KIMONO WITH A CHERRY BLOSSOM DESIGN.
YOUNG MASTER, THERE IS SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS IN THE HOUSE!
HEY, DON'T INTERRUPT WHITE TAIL!
DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT, BLUE STORM?
IF YOU JUST IGNORE HER, SHE'LL LEAVE ON HER OWN
IS IT WISE TO JUST IGNORE HER?
SHOULD WE REALLY DO NOTHING?
STILL HERE...
I'M GOING OUT
COULD IT BE A PRANK?
IT HAS TO BE SOMEBODY FROM THE SUNDAY CLASSES.
I'VE ASKED EVERYBODY, BUT NO ONE HAS CLAIMED THEM.


WHAT IS HER REASON FOR BEING HERE?
SHE JUST WALKS AROUND THE HOUSE.
NO, THEY'RE NOT MINE.
NOT MINE, EITHER
WHO ELSE WAS WEARING A KIMONO?
LAST WEEK... ONLY HIDAKA-CHAN AND I WERE WEARING THEM.
WHEN WE CAME IN, THERE WERE FOUR OF US. SO INCLUDING YOUR SON, THE TOTAL SHOULD HAVE BEEN FIVE.
I THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE AT THE TIME, BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE COUNTING YOURSELF
SENSEI...
THERE HAD TO BE ONE OTHER TWO IN REGULAR CLOTHES AND THREE IN KIMONOS
Six people sitting together makes it quite crowded.



*Zashiki Warashi: fairy of the hearth (zashiki = tatami room) who guards a house and brings prosperity and happiness. It is not given s


THIS SEEMS FAMILIAR.
CRUNK
AH.
Oni-san, over here...
toward my clapping.
PURPLE WITH CHERRY BLOSSOMS.
HAVEN'T I SEEN IT BEFORE?
ONI-SAN
OVER HERE.
TOWARD...
MY CLAPPING.

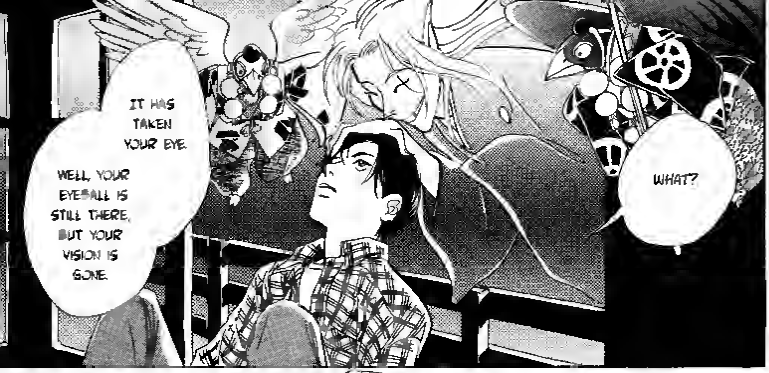

ONI-SAN, OVER HERE.
TOWARD MY—
grab..
WAH!
PULL
SO STRONG!
WHAM


WAA AAAH !!!
RITSU!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
IT HURTS
RITSU?
IS THERE SOMETHING COVERING MY EYE?
MY EYE...
WHAT?
THERE'S NOTHING
HUH?


MY LEFT EYE.
I CAN'T SEE OUT OF IT
HMM...
FROM WHAT I CAN SEE, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG
WE'LL GIVE YOU A COMPLETE CHECKUP, BUT IT MAY BE PSYCHOLOGICAL...
CAUSED BY STRESS OR SOMETHING
DID YOU LOSE YOUR SIGHT SUDDENLY?
grope
ARE YOU OK?
RITSU, TELL ME IF SOMETHING IS WORRYING YOU
NOTHING IS
I TOLD YOU STUPID
matter


I CAN'T JUDGE DISTANCES OR THE HEIGHT OF STAIRS.
AND MY RANGE OF VISION HAS SHRUNK. SO I HAVE TO TURN MY HEAD TO SEE CLEARLY.
IT'S PROBABLY JUST TEMPORARY
YOU REALLY CAN'T SEE?
Myi, my...
I'M WORN OUT.
MY RIGHT EYE IS EXHAUSTED.
CLACK
I'M FINE!
YOU SHOULD ASK TO BE EXCUSED FROM SCHOOL FOR A WHILE.
OH MY!
BUT IT'S NOT SAFE.
THAT WAS VERY DANGEROUS.
IT FELL OVER I'LL JUST WIPE THE TABLE.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

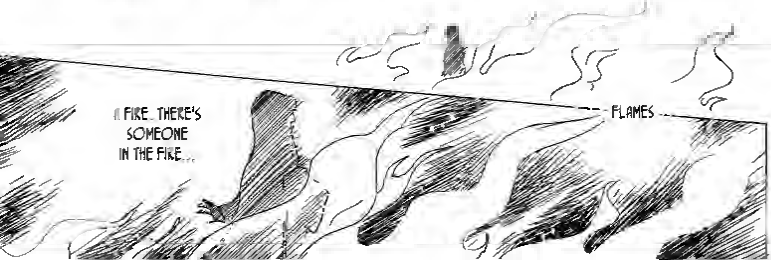

twitch..
STILL HERE.
WHAT KIND OF SPIRIT IS IT?
stare
WHAM
OW!
DAMN~~
Thunk..
WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY EYE!?
WHEN IT HAPPENED, IT FELT LIKE...
MY EYE WAS BEING GOUGED
YOUR EYE IS GONE.


IT HAS TAKEN YOUR EYE.
WELL, YOUR EYEBALL IS STILL THERE, BUT YOUR VISION IS GONE.
WHAT?


HURRY UP AND TELL ME HOW TO GET MY SIGHT BACK!
YOU, LIKE KAGYUU, HAVE THE ABILITY TO SEE WHAT HUMAN EYES CAN'T. SO WHY DO YOU NEED YOUR EYE BACK?


Toward my clapping
THAT'S WHAT IT WAS—A GAME OF BLINDFOLDED ONI.
Oni-san, over here!

YOUNG MASTER, JUST TELL ME WHAT TO DO!
NO, TELL ME! ME!
YOU'RE USELESS.
Humph!


A FIRE... THERE'S SOMEONE IN THE FIRE...
FLAMES

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HOW'S YOUR EYE NOW?
AH, YES! LET'S CALL HER TO COME OVER AND PLAY!
TSUKASA WOULD HAVE BEEN SIX OR SEVEN. SHE MIGHT STILL REMEMBER SOMETHING!
YES, SHE WAS
WHITE TAIL,
BLACK TAIL
BOING
SO HIDE YOURSELVES AND DON'T LET HER CATCH SIGHT OF YOU.
NO, YOU GUYS STAY AWAY FROM HER
SHE HAS SOME ABILITY TO SEE!
EXCITED
EXCITED
MY COUSIN TSUKASA-CHAN IS COMING HERE
THE DEMON TOOK THE FORM OF A HUGE MARK ON HER BACK WHICH CAUSED HER TWELVE YEARS OF DEPRESSION AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.
COUSIN TSUKASA WAS POSSESSED BY A DEMON WHEN SHE WAS SEVEN.
YOUNG MASTER'S COUSIN? THEN WE WILL BE REALLY NICE TO HER!


From now on, I can wear whatever I like!
And wear my hair however I want
WHEN THE DEMON LEFT THE MARK DISAPPEARED?
RITSU!
TSUKASA-CHAN!
I HEARD YOU LOST YOUR SIGHT, SO I CAME TO SEE HOW YOU'RE DOING.
IT'S ONLY MY LEFT EYE.
LOOK.
DRIVER'S LICENSE?
WHAT? SHE HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL!
.....
?
IF YOU WANT ME TO BE ENVIOUS YOU NEED TO RUB IT IN MORE THAN THAT
SORRY, I WAS BORN WITH A LOW-KEY PERSONALITY
16 years old


I SAW A GIRL IN A PURPLE KIMONO WITH A CHERRY BLOSSOM PATTERN IN THE HALLWAY
ONE OF YOUR STUDENTS IS ALREADY HERE.
AUNTIE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY WITH ME. DON'T YOU HAVE A CLASS NOW?
HE'S FINE.
HOW IS YOUR FATHER?
OH! YOU DIDN'T CHANGE YOUR HAIRSTYLE AT ALL!
UH... THANK YOU, TSUKASA-CHAN!
THIS IS A GET WELL PRESENT
I GUESS HUMANS AREN'T ABLE TO CHANGE THAT QUICKLY
HISEKI ARLE FOR 12 YEARS.
ACTUALLY, ONI-GOKKO WAS KIND OF A SCARY GAME TO PLAY HERE...
BECAUSE THIS HOUSE IS SO OLD AND BIG
I REMEMBER US PLAYING ONI-GOKKO* ONCE BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER WHO ALL WAS HERE...
AH. THIS BRINGS BACK MEMORIES WHEN WE WERE YOUNG. ALL OUR COUSINS USED TO PLAY HERE TOGETHER


I REMEMBER IT WAS NEW YEAR'S SOME OF US WERE WEARING KIMONOS
YOU WERE WEARING A RED ONE.
ONE OF THE GIRLS HAD A PURPLE ONE WITH WHITE FLOWERS ON IT
SHE WAS VERY PRETTY, BUT I DON'T REMEMBER WHO SHE WAS
OH YES... SHE LOOKED LIKE THAT GIRL I JUST SAW IN THE HALLWAY
SO SHE WAS THERE WHEN WE WERE PLAYING BLINDFOLDED ONI.
WHOEVER LOST JANKENPON BECAME THE BLINDFOLDED ONI.
I CAN'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT THE GAME THAT TIME.
AND HAD TO CATCH THE KIDS WHO WERE CLAPPING AND SINGING
Toward my clapping—
Oni-san, over here!
WHY DON'T YOU STAY OVER TONIGHT?
HOW DID IT END?
WHAT DID GRANDPA SAY AT THAT TIME?
Let go!
YES, YOU SHOULD STAY!


SO TIRED... I MUST HAVE DOZED OFF...
I SHOULD GET UP...
WHAT?
RITSU! YOU'LL CATCH A COLD IF YOU SLEEP THERE.
OH...
THIS MUST BE A DREAM
HOW ELSE COULD I SEE GRANDPA'S HANDS BEHIND ME?
ARAKAWA KIMEYO?
Arakawa Kimeyo
UMM... WHO'S BEHIND ME?
OH... IT'S GRANDPA
OH...
GOING ALREADY?
RITSU IS JUST LIKE HIS GRAND-FATHER—
HE CAN SEE THINGS NORMAL PEOPLE CAN'T SEE.


HUH?
RITSU ARE YOU AWAKE?
COME AND HAVE SOME TEA
MIZUKI WA KINEYO?
Ritsu is just like his grandfather—he can see things normal people can't see.
You, like Kagyuu, have the ability to see what human eyes can't...


Kimeyo-chan!
Stop!


IF HE'S RIGHT, THEN THAT PERSON BECOMES THE ONI
THE ONI HAS TO GUESS THE NAME OF THE PERSON HE CATCHES.
HEY! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE WE PLAYED BLINDFOLDED ONI!
IT'S NOT OFTEN TSUKASA-CHAN IS HERE, SO LET'S PLAY
SOME-THING'S WRONG..
I'LL PLAY!
HUH?
I'M GOING TO PASS!
COUNT ME IN!
DO YOU EVEN KNOW THE RULES?
RUN AROUND AND HIDE ANYWHERE IN THIS ROOM
ONI-SAN OVER HERE!
I CAN EAT THE ONES I CATCH, RIGHT?
I'M THE ONI, SO YOU BACK OFF AND STAY OUT OF IT
OK, HERE I COME. RUN!


WHY DON'T YOU COME CATCH ME, RITSU?
TSUKASA-CHAN, RUN OFF SOMEWHERE.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? ARE YOU UP TO SOMETHING?
TOWARD MY CLAPPING...
I TOLD YOU TO BACK OFF!
MOM, RUN FARTHER AWAY DON'T JUST STAND THERE.
TOWARD MY CLAPPING —
SMILING
BAM..!
OW!
ONI-SAN, OVER HERE.
WHERE ARE YOU?
COME OUT AND LET'S PLAY TOGETHER!


I CAUGHT YOU!
YOU ARE ARAKAWA KIMEYO!
KIMEYO-CHAN!
WHAM
URGH!
HERE, YOU CAN HAVE IT BACK!
YOU'RE RIGHT.


NOW IT'S MY TURN TO BE THE ONI.
HUH?
I CAN SEE!
MY EYE IS BACK!
ONI-SAN, OVER HERE
TOWARD MY CLAPPING...


Creak
ONI-SAN, OVER HERE.
TOWARD...
Glow
AAHH!!
HUH?
MEGG!
YAHHH!!
AAHH!!
TSUKASA-CHAN?


I'm I was fishing in my...
UN-UNCLE?
TSUKASA-CHAN!?
JUST NOW... SOMEONE GRABBED MY HAND!
WHA?
WAHH!
THUD!
SHE'S HERE IN THE HOUSE!
I'M SURE... IT WAS THAT GIRL FROM BEFORE!
THE GIRL WITH THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS ON HER KIMONO CHASED ME!
OH... AND MY EYE IS HEALED
WHAT?
MOM LET'S SPRINKLE SALT AROUND THE HOUSE.
I'M NOT PLAYING ANYMORE! IT'S TOO CREEPY!


BLUE STORM, WHAT WERE YOU TRYING TO DO TO TSUKASA?
...I JUST WANTED TO PROTECT HER!
HUMANS DON'T TASTE GOOD AT ALL!
I WON'T KNOW THAT UNLESS I TRY ONE.
THAT WAS AWFUL... AND SCARY.
Auntie's coming?
pop in
A BIRD?

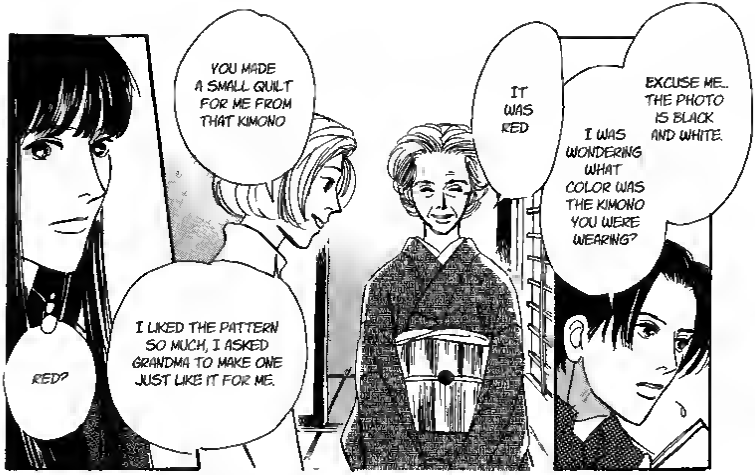

UN-UNCLE!
Wah!
OOPS SHE SAW ME.
ABILITY?
THAT ABILITY OF RITSU'S— DOES IT DISTURB YOU TOO, UNCLE?
OH!
WELL, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.
SCARY? COMPARED TO YOUR LATE GRANDFATHER, HE'S JUST CUTE.
I SHOULD THANK HIM BUT THAT PART OF HIM IS SCARY
HIS SIXTH SENSE. I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHAT IT IS, BUT I THINK HE HELPED ME GET RID OF THAT MARK ON MY BACK.
THIS KIMONO_


I DON'T KNOW. THESE PICTURES ARE MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS OLD.
WHO ARE THE TWO GIRLS?
THAT'S YOUR GRANDPA!
WHERE DID YOU DIG OUT THESE OLD PHOTOS?
THAT GIRL IS ARAKAWA KIMEYO.
THAT WAS WAY BEFORE I MARRIED HIM.
I ASKED THE EARTH GOD IN HORIKE.
HE SAID THERE USED TO BE A FAMILY NAMED ARAKAWA AROUND HERE
BUT ABOUT 60 YEARS AGO THERE WAS A FIRE AND THEY LEFT
DID HE MENTION A GIRL NAMED KIMEYO FROM THAT FAMILY?
HE SAID HE DOESN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HUMAN AFFAIRS.
BUT HE DID KNOW SOMEONE DIED IN THE FIRE.
THAT DREAM I HAD THE OTHER DAY...
MUST HAVE BEEN KIMEYO'S MEMORIES


TSUKASA-CHAN, YOU HAVEN'T GONE HOME YET?
Don't you have school?
OH A WHITE BIRD
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
IF I DON'T FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY, I'LL KEEP WORRYING ABOUT IT
OH THAT'S RIGHT WE ONLY GOT HALFWAY THROUGH THE GAME.
IF YOU TELL ME WHAT THAT GAME WAS ALL ABOUT, I'LL GO HOME.
Flap flap
WAAHH!
ONI-SAN OVER—
LET'S FINISH
DO NOT PLAY BLIND-FOLDED ON!!
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT IT'S BECAUSE OF A GUEST.
HER NAME IS ARAKAWA KIMEYO
DO NOT PLAY BLIND-FOLDED ON!!
SENSEI, WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?
WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?
Hahaha


WE HAVE THIS SAME PICTURE AT OUR HOUSE
THE GIRL ON THE LEFT IS MY GRAND-MOTHER
SHE TOLD ME SHE USED TO LIVE AROUND HERE IS THAT BOY YOUR FATHER SENSEI?
AH.. LAST SUNDAY YOU CAME TO CLASS..
THIS IS HIDAKA SUMIKO
MY GRAND-MOTHER'S SISTER WAS NAMED ARAKAWA KIMEYO
TSUKASA-CHAN DO YOU DRIVE A LOT AT HOME?
GET IN! GET IN!
MY GRANDMOTHER'S SISTER DIED IN A WAREHOUSE FIRE WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG
IT SEEMS SAFER TO DRIVE MYSELF..
I DON'T HAVE MUCH EXPERIENCE DRIVING ON ROADS
I WONDER IF I COULD ASK YOUR GRANDMOTHER ABOUT SOMETHING


YOU'RE STEPPING ON THE BRAKES!
THAT'S A GREEN LIGHT WHY AREN'T YOU GOING? HURRY UP!
REALLY? YOU SHOULD HAVE SAID SO EARLIER
YOU WEREN'T ALLOWED TO TURN RIGHT BACK THERE.
TOO FAST!
SHE PROBABLY KNOCKED OVER THE CANDLE AND STARTED THE FIRE.
MY SISTER USED TO LIKE READING IN THE WAREHOUSE.
WHEN WE WERE YOUNG, YOUR GRANDFATHER AND I WERE NEIGHBORS. WE USED TO PLAY TOGETHER A LOT
I REMEMBER HE ALWAYS HEARD AND SAW STRANGE, INTERESTING THINGS
SO YOU'RE IIJIMA-SAN'S GRANDSON.
THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER SUMIKO.
WE JUST LEFT MY SISTER'S SOUL TO WANDER THERE!
EVEN THOUGH ONLY THE WAREHOUSE BURNED
WE MOVED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY

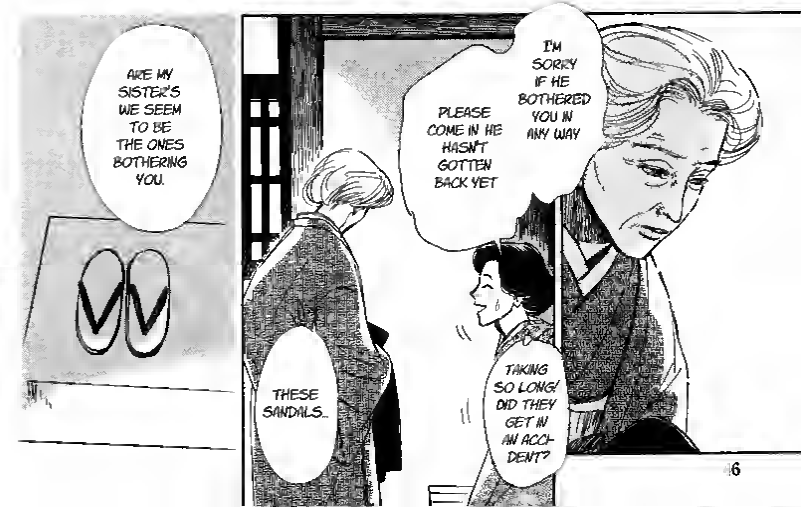

EXCUSE ME... THE PHOTO IS BLACK AND WHITE.
I WAS WONDERING WHAT COLOR WAS THE KIMONO YOU WERE WEARING?
IT WAS RED
YOU MADE A SMALL QUILT FOR ME FROM THAT KIMONO
I LIKED THE PATTERN SO MUCH, I ASKED GRANDMA TO MAKE ONE JUST LIKE IT FOR ME.
RED?


MAY I ASK YOU TO COME TO MY HOUSE?
I DON'T WANT TO SOUND RUDE, BUT IS THERE SOME REASON YOUR SISTER'S SOUL IS STILL WANDERING IN THIS WORLD?


MAY I ALSO ASK, WAS SHE ABLE TO SEE WITH HER LEFT EYE?
KUH?
WELL... NEVER MIND SORRY TO BOTHER YOU


SUMIKO-SAN WAS ALSO WEARING A RED ONE
PERHAPS KIMEYO-SAN'S GHOST RUNS AFTER ANYONE IN A RED KIMONO BECAUSE SHE THINKS THE PERSON IS HER SISTER
BACK WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD YOU WERE WEARING A RED KIMONO
I'M DRIVING ON THE WAY BACK
RITSU,
if you feel lonely, just come and play at our house.
Kimeyo-chan,
THIS DOESN'T LOOK RIGHT
ARE WE LOST?
YUP
AH ONEE-SAN...


I AM HIDAKA SUMIKO'S GRAND-MOTHER.
I JUST... UH... MET YOUR SON.
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING BEFORE?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE TAKING A SHORTCUT.
COMING. WHO IS IT?


ARE MY SISTER'S WE SEEM TO BE THE ONES BOTHERING YOU.
I'M SORRY IF HE BOTHERED YOU IN ANY WAY
PLEASE COME IN HE HASN'T GOTTEN BACK YET
THESE SANDALS..
TAKING SO LONG! DID THEY GET IN AN ACCI-DENT?


I WAS THE ONE WHO ESCAPED AND LEFT HER THERE.
OH?
WHEN SHE WAS VERY YOUNG, SHE LOST THE SIGHT IN HER LEFT EYE.
SHE REALLY HASN'T FORGIVEN ME.
SHE MUST HAVE COME BACK TO LOOK FOR ME
SHE WAS VERY SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT IT.


THAT NIGHT, SHE AND I WERE PLAYING BLINDFOLDED ONI IN THE WAREHOUSE
SHE HARDLY EVER WENT OUT TO PLAY MOST OF THE TIME, I PLAYED WITH HER IN THE WAREHOUSE.
SOMETIMES, ILJIMA-SAN CAME TO JOIN US.


AND IT GOT REALLY SCARY PLAYING THAT GAME IN THERE.
IT WAS MY SISTER'S IDEA. THE ONLY LIGHT WAS A CANDLE.
JUST THEN...
SO WHEN MY SISTER WAS THE ONI, I TRIED TO SNEAK OUT.
ONE THOUGHT WAS TO RUN BACK TO THE MAIN HOUSE TO GET MY PARENTS
I WAS SO SCARED, I COULDN'T EVEN SCREAM.


HOWEVER I HAD FORGOTTEN -
THEY HAD GONE OUT SOMEWHERE THAT NIGHT. NO ONE WAS AT THE HOUSE.
SUDDENLY, THE ENTIRE WAREHOUSE BURST INTO FLAMES. I WAS SO SCARED, ALL I COULD DO WAS HIDE
LATER I WAS AFRAID TO TELL MY PARENTS WHAT WE WERE DOING BEFORE THE FIRE.
I LIED AND TOLD EVERYONE THAT MY SISTER HAD BEEN READING BY HERSELF IN THE WAREHOUSE AND THAT I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED
'Kimeyo-chan,
AT THE FUNERAL IIJIMA-SAN SAID..
ALL THIS TIME YOU MUST HAVE WANTED TO CATCH ME.
IT'S BEEN SIXTY YEARS, AND I HAVE NEVER TOLD ANYONE ABOUT IT
ONEE-SAN..
if you feel lonely, just come and play at our house.'
I THOUGHT HE SAW THROUGH ME, AND I WAS TERRIFIED


Swish
Swish
ONEE-SAN..
ONEE-SAN!
WAIT, ONEE-SAN!
ONEE-SAN..
I'M SORRY


I'M SO SORRY!
I'M SORRY!
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET IT INTO THE GARAGE.
TSUKASA-CHAN, WHY ARE YOU STOPPING HERE?
WE'RE FINALLY HERE.
HORRIFIED


SHE'S GONE.
HER EYES WEREN'T COVERED
UH-HUH
THE CHILD WHO WAS THE BLINDFOLDED ONI...
BECAME A GHOST WITHOUT REALIZING IT.
THE GAME HAS FINALLY ENDED NOW SHE WANTS TO GO HOME.
I WANT TO GO HOME TOO.


IT'S BEEN 30 YEARS
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN?
THE PILLAR FESTIVAL?
I'M HOME!
...AND THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME LEFT TO FIND A REPLACEMENT
BUT IT'S A REAL HEADACHE. THE GIRL WHO WAS PLAYING THE MAIDEN ROLE QUIT...
WELCOME
HE CAME TO VISIT US WHILE HE WAS IN THE AREA
AH, TSUKASA. THIS IS SHINYA-SAN FROM THE FUKUSHIMA FAMILY
NINE-TEEN
HOW OLD ARE YOU NOW?
IS THIS TSUKASA-CHAN? YOU'VE GROWN SO BEAUTIFUL AND YOUR HAIR IS SO LONG
I'M PREPARING FOR A FESTIVAL WOULD YOU LIKE TO PARTICIPATE?
I THINK TSUKASA-CHAN COULD DO IT

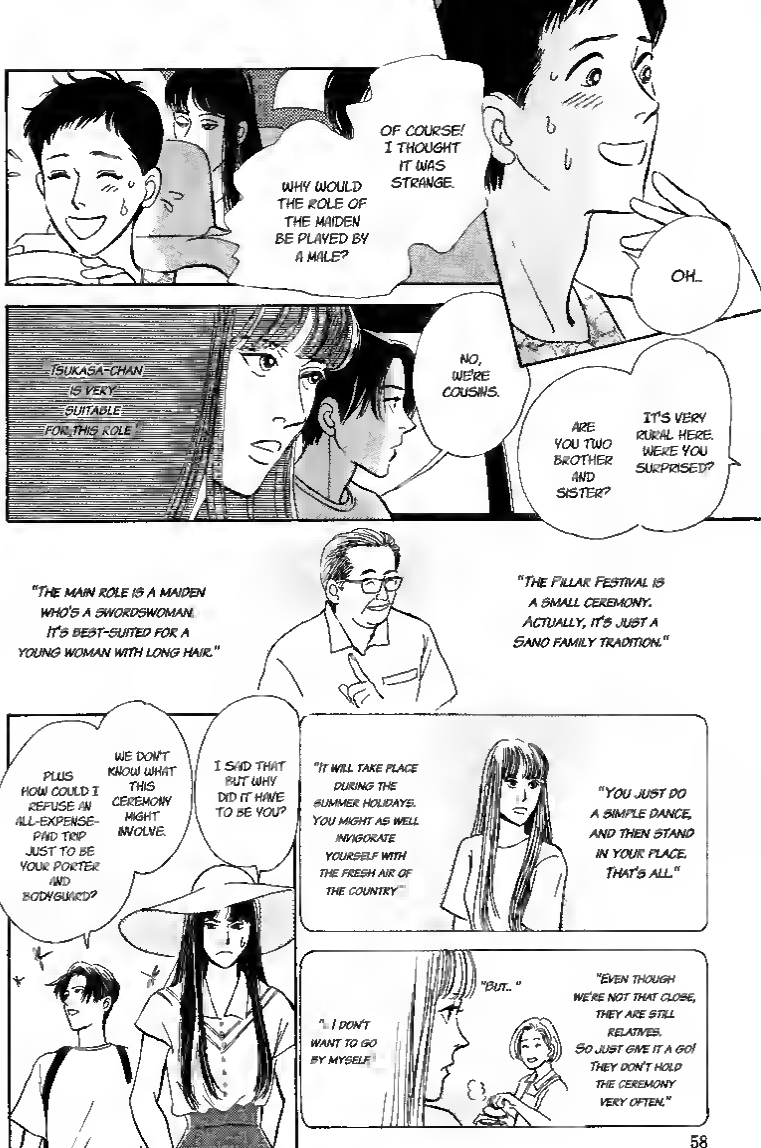
The Merged Demon Festival

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WHOA...
DEFINITELY THE COUNTRY-SIDE.
SCREECH
Vroom
IS THIS SOME KIND OF A JOKE?
WHICH WAY DO WE GO?
ARE YOU TSUKASA-SAN?
I'M LATE!
SHE'S TSUKASA
I'M RITSU.
SORRY FOR MAKING YOU WAIT!


OH...
IT'S VERY RURAL HERE. WERE YOU SURPRISED?
ARE YOU TWO BROTHER AND SISTER?
NO, WE'RE COUSINS.
"TSUKASA-CHAN IS VERY SUITABLE FOR THIS ROLE."
OF COURSE! I THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE.
WHY WOULD THE ROLE OF THE MAIDEN BE PLAYED BY A MALE?
"THE MAIN ROLE IS A MAIDEN WHO'S A SWORDSWOMAN. IT'S BEST-SUITED FOR A YOUNG WOMAN WITH LONG HAIR."
"THE FILLAR FESTIVAL IS A SMALL CEREMONY. ACTUALLY, IT'S JUST A SANO FAMILY TRADITION."
"IT WILL TAKE PLACE DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS. YOU MIGHT AS WELL INVIGORATE YOURSELF WITH THE FRESH AIR OF THE COUNTRY."
"YOU JUST DO A SIMPLE DANCE, AND THEN STAND IN YOUR PLACE. THAT'S ALL."
"BUT.. "
"... I DON'T WANT TO GO BY MYSELF."
"EVEN THOUGH WE'RE NOT THAT CLOSE, THEY ARE STILL RELATIVES. SO JUST GIVE IT A GO! THEY DON'T HOLD THE CEREMONY VERY OFTEN."
I SAID THAT BUT WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE YOU?
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS CEREMONY MIGHT INVOLVE.
PLUS HOW COULD I REFUSE AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP JUST TO BE YOUR PORTER AND BODYGUARD?


THIS IS MY HOME
WHAT IS SHE SAYING?
SHE JUST ISN'T AWARE OF HER OWN POWERS.
I JUST WANT TO ENJOY THE CAREFREE VILLAGE LIFE, SO DON'T GET ME INVOLVED IN ANYTHING
WHENEVER I'M WITH YOU STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN
UH-OH I'M GETTING A BAD FEELING.
WOW... SUCH A BIG HOUSE.
Boom...
I'M REALLY NOT LIKING THIS HOUSE.
MOTHER TOLD ME THIS BRANCH OF THE FAMILY OWNED A LOT OF LAND BEFORE THE WAR
THIS HOUSE IS VERY OLD PLEASE COME THIS WAY


GOOD-BYE!
WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THANK YOU FOR COMING ALL THIS WAY.


THIS IS MY ONLY DAUGHTER RUMIKO
NICE TO MEET YOU.


THIS IS MY BROTHER SHINYA AND HIS WIFE JUNKO THEY ALSO LIVE HERE.
AND THAT'S THEIR SON RYOUICHI


I AM THE HEAD OF THE SANO FAMILY. ICHIROU.


No... My carefree village life
OUR FAMILY IS VERY GRATEFUL.
FOR YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF THIS IMPORTANT MISSION,
AH... THIS...
IT'S OUR DISTANT RELATIVE, TSUKASA-CHAN FROM THE IIJIMA FAMILY!
AH... AH...
SHE'S GOING TO HELP US PERFORM 'SWORDS-WOMAN!'
Chii Chii
Chii
GRANDMA!
THE ROLE OF THE MAIDEN HAS BEEN DECIDED!
AH...
I AM TSUKASA. NICE TO MEET YOU
Chii


GRANNY HAS BEEN BEDRIDDEN SINCE LAST YEAR.
THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE WHOLE HOUSE FEELS HEAVY
SHE BARELY RECOGNIZES US NOWADAYS. ANYWAY, THAT'S OUR ENTIRE FAMILY.
LAST YEAR GRANDFATHER PASSED AWAY, AND FIVE YEARS BEFORE THAT, MOTHER DIED
OUR FAMILY HAS BEEN UNLUCKY IN RECENT YEARS.
OUR RELATIVES KEEP SAYING IT'S BECAUSE MY FATHER'S GENERATION STILL HASN'T HELD THE PILLAR FESTIVAL.
AND THEN WHEN WE FINALLY DECIDED TO HOLD IT THERE WAS NO ONE TO PLAY THE MAIDEN FORTUNATELY, YOU CAME TO HELP
WHY COULDN'T YOU DO IT?
I-I'M ALREADY 24!
BESIDES, A SHORT-HAIRED MAIDEN WOULDN'T FIT THE ROLE!
?
RITSU,
YOU HAVE BIRD DROPPINGS ON YOUR BACK!
IT'S DISGUSTING
THE PILLAR FESTIVAL IS PERFORMED TO REMOVE EVIL. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE HELD BY THE HEAD'S FAMILY EVERY GENERATION DURING THE HARVEST SEASON


THE CEREMONY HAS A LOT OF DETAILS SO THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE WHO REMEMBER HOW TO CONDUCT IT PROPERLY
SLIDE
ALSO, IT REQUIRES A LOT OF WORK AND CAN BE QUITE EXPENSIVE.
Thump
MY FATHER'S GENERATION THOUGHT THEY COULD AVOID HOLDING IT.
ISN'T THIS POLE BIG?
THIS IS THE SACRED PILLAR GOD
SUCH A STRONG SPIRITUAL FORCE...
IT'S MADE OF ONE WHOLE TREE.
THE HARVESTS USED TO BE DEVASTATED BY FROSTS. THE FAMILY AND THE VILLAGERS HAD TO WORK TOGETHER IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.


THE FESTIVAL BEGINS WITH THREE PEOPLE, ACTING AS MONSTERS, DANCING AROUND THE POLE.
THE SACRED PILLAR IS LIKE A HOUSE GUARDIAN GOD IT UNITES THE PEOPLE AND BRINGS US BLESSINGS
BUT BECAUSE ITS POWER IS SO STRONG EVEN BAD THINGS ARE ATTRACTED TO IT
THE SWORDSWOMAN APPEARS AND PERFORMS A DANCE OF EXORCISM.
OH, W HERE!
TSUKASA-SAN, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THE THREE PEOPLE WHO WILL BE PLAYING THE ROLES OF THE MONSTERS. THEY ARE ALL FROM THIS AREA.
KEISUKE,
KAZUO, AND SABUROU.
AFTER A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME THE EVIL SPIRITS ACCUMULATE AND CAN ENDANGER THE VILLAGE.
SO EVERY SO OFTEN, THE CEREMONY WAS HELD TO CLEANSE THE SACRED PILLAR.


UM... NICE TO MEET YOU.
Nice to meet you!
THEY'VE BEEN PRACTICING THEIR DANCE FOR SIX MONTHS.
HOWEVER THE MAIN ROLE OF THE SWORDS-WOMAN IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.
THE CEREMONY IS IN TEN DAYS
S-six months?
IT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WAS SAID BEFORE!
Wah-
Good-bye carefree village life...
SINCE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PLAY THE PART OF THE SWORDSWOMAN YOU MUST LEARN THE DANCE QUICKLY
STARTING NOW, I WILL BE GIVING YOU INTENSIVE TRAINING


A MONSTER CHARGES HERE.
BAM!
PUT YOUR SWORD UP TO YOUR HEAD TO BLOCK
BAM!!
GOOD TURN AROUND
BEND YOUR WAIST
LIFT YOUR ARM
SMACK
OUCH!
AAAAAH
IT'S TOO MUCH TO LEARN ALL AT ONCE.
Sorry!
HMM.
WHAT A HEADACHE. THAT GIRL CAN'T LEARN THE DANCE IN TEN DAYS.
I DIDN'T THINK A GIRL FROM TOKYO WOULD BE SO CLUMSY


Chii Chii
JUST ADMIT IT YOU FELL RIGHT INTO HIS TRAP
THEY COULDN'T FIND ANYONE ELSE TO DO IT BECAUSE IT'S TOO HARD
THAT'S MESSED UP! UNCLE SHINYA SAID IT WAS A SIMPLE DANCE. HE SAID I'D JUST HAVE TO STAND THERE.
Chii Chii
WHAT A CATAS-TROPHE.
*Amenomihashira Pillar of Heaven
SINCE THIS FAMILY OWNED ALL THE LAND, IT WAS PROBABLY THE CORE OF THE VILLAGE.
...LIKE THE GARDEN OF EDEN'S TREE OF LIFE OR THE IZANAGI AND IZANAMI'S AMENOMIHASHIRA*
OH
HAVING AN ENORMOUS POLE IN THE HOUSE IS A BIT STRANGE.
THE TRADITION MUST HAVE COME FROM THE WORLD TREE MYTHOLOGY
THE WORLD'S CORE IS SUPPOSED TO BE A HUGE TREE POLE OR TOWER.
BUT THOSE MYTHS ARE USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY


YOU MUST BE TIRED HAVE SOME WATERMELON
IT'S FRESH FROM THE GARDEN
OH, IT LOOKS DELICIOUS. I'LL HAVE SOME!
SCRATCH SCRATCH
YOU'RE LUCKY TO BE SO CAREFREE
IS IT REALLY TIRING TO TRY TO LEARN SO MUCH AT ONE TIME?
DAD SAID HE'LL BE WORKING WITH YOU AGAIN TOMORROW
IT'S GOOD DON'T YOU WANT ANY?
NO, THANKS I'M GOING FOR A WALK
YUM, YUM
WHITE TAIL BLACK TAIL, WHY DID YOU FOLLOW ME?
OUR JOB IS TO SERVE OUR MASTER
AND HERE I THOUGHT I'D HAVE SOME PEACE AND QUIET WHEN I FORCED BLUE STORM TO STAY HOME
WE'RE NOT HERE TO BOTHER YOU YOUNG MASTER!


That soul you're not really one to talk.
YOU THINK SO, TOO?
THERE'S A POWERFUL AURA COMING FROM THIS HOUSE.
Rabbit Rabbit
Rabbit Rabbit
RIGHT!
BE CAREFUL NOT TO GET SPOTTED
IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THE PILLAR
YOU TWO GO KEEP AN EYE ON TSUKASA-CHAN
RUMIKO!
I DON'T WANT TO BE THIS FAMILY'S PRISONER. JUST SELL THE LAND OR THE HOUSE.
AT LEAST THAT WILL PAY OFF THE DEBTS.
AH...
SORRY
IT'S BECAUSE OF YOUR STUBBORNNESS THAT THINGS HAVE TURNED OUT LIKE THIS.
I DON'T CARE! I REFUSE TO BE DAD'S PUPPET!


HMPH!
CLUNK!
SNAP!
SORRY FOR BEING SO CLUMSY
YOU THINK I WANT TO DANCE?
AND MISTAKING RITSU FOR ME BECAUSE OF THE NAME!
I ENVY RUMIKO SHE HAS SUCH A CUTE NAME.
AND SHE'S SO REFINED AND WELL-MANNERED
Lala Lalala
Lalala
UNLIKE ME— I JUST LOOK GLOOMY
SHIRR SHIRR
EH?


YOU'RE THE PERFECT MATCH FOR OUR MASTER
YOUR EXCEPTIONAL BEAUTY EQUALS YOUR SHREWDNESS.
ARE YOU TALKING TO ME?
TOO MUCH SAKE CAN MAKE YOU SLEEPY OR MAYBE HYPERACTIVE? I THINK I'M SEEING THINGS
HAVE I DRUNK TOO MUCH?
BUT THIS KIND OF DRUNKENNESS ISN'T TOO BAD
YOU'RE AMAZING PRINCESS.
HOW EMBARRASSING! YOU CALLED ME BEAUTIFUL! WHO IS YOUR MASTER?
SMACK!
Come, come. You look too
No, no How can I?
YOU'RE BOTH REALLY NICE.
Hee hee
THIS MIGHT BE THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN ABLE TO LAUGH WITH DRINKING BUDDIES.
I THOUGHT I'D BE MISERABLE DRINKING ALL ALONE. I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE THIS MUCH FUN
Sake, sake
Sake Sake
OH, DEAR WE'VE RUN OUT
AH, I SMELL ALCOHOL!
I'M GOING TO GO FIND SOME MORE.


TSUKASA-CHAN, BREAKFAST TIME!
HURRY UP AND GET OUT OF BED!
OOOH..
MORNING.
WHOA REEKS OF ALCOHOL!
GOOD MORNING HERE HAVE SOME MISO SOUP
I THOUGHT A DRUNKEN CHICKEN CAME IN
SHUT UP I ONLY HAD TWO OR THREE.
TODAY IN THE MAIN ROOM, THERE WILL BE A WINE CEREMONY PLEASE BE SURE TO COME.
WINE CEREMONY?
ONE HUNDRED DAYS BEFORE HOLDING THE PILLAR FESTIVAL, WE OFFER SAKE TO THE SACRED PILLAR
THEN, SEVEN DAYS BEFORE THE CEREMONY THE FAMILY MEMBERS DRINK THE SAKE.
TO SYMBOLIZE THE GOD'S MERCY TO US.


HUH?!
Ah, thank you
PLEASE TAKE A CUP
IT IS SAID THAT IF THERE IS LESS WINE LEFT AFTER THE FIRST OFFERING, THEN THE SACRED PILLAR HAS DRUNK SOME. IT'S AN OMEN
A PILLAR THAT DRINKS SAKE?
THE BUCKET WAS HEAVY!
THAT'S RIDICULOUS. IT WAS PROBABLY EMPTY IN THE FIRST PLACE!
IT'S.. EMPTY! IT'S ALL GONE!
UGH~
I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DRINK AGAIN
PLUS, THE SEAL WAS INTACT!
AH..
THE MISSING SAKE MEANS THE SACRED PILLAR DRANK IT
THIS IS AN OMEN
IT WASN'T ME!
NO.. IF THE FAMILY CAN'T DRINK THE SACRED PILLAR'S WINE IT MEANS WE'RE UNPROTECTED


DON'T BE SILLY! THE BUCKET WAS SEALED!
TSUKASA-CHAN YOU REALLY DIDN'T DO IT?
AND BESIDES, HOW COULD I DRINK A WHOLE BUCKET OF SAKE?
IT'S AN OMEN
WH-
WHAT?
I WAS DRINKING WITH TWO WEIRD BIRDS. WHEN WE RAN OUT OF SAKE THEY SAID THEY'D GET SOME MORE FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE.
BUT YESTERDAY, I DID HAVE A STRANGE DREAM.
MOTHER, WHERE ARE THE PROPERTY PAPERS?
WHERE DID FATHER PUT ALL THE IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS?
AH..
SHINYA?
DO YOU REMEMBER ME?
MOTHER IT'S ME! SHINYA.
BURP
Hoohoo

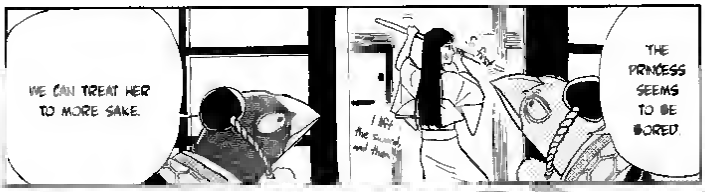

I NEED THE PAPERS, MOTHER
IT WILL BE A BIG PROBLEM IF WE DON'T GET THEM.
AH...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, UNCLE?
MOTHER!
YOU CAN'T FORCE HER GRANNY HAS ALREADY FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING.
IF WE CAN SELL THE MOUNTAIN LAND THE MONEY CAN SAVE OUR FAMILY
MORE BAD LUCK. ISN'T THIS AN OMEN?
OTHERWISE WE'RE DONE FOR
THE SACRED PILLAR MUST BE VERY ANGRY!
IT'S NOT MY FAULT YOU AND DAD HAVE DEBTS.
YOUR FATHER WON'T AGREE TO IT.
WHY DON'T WE JUST SELL THE HOUSE?

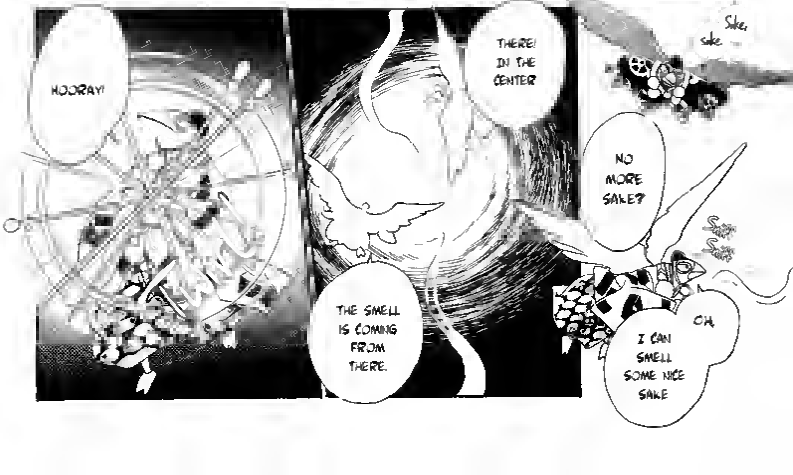


*Youkai, general term used for ghost, goblins and other monsters in Japanese folktales.
For more information see --> http //en.wikipedia org/wiki/Yokai
**Iemori – house guardian.


THIS FAMILY HAS NOT CONDUCTED THE CEREMONY FOR 30 YEARS.
DURING ALL THE TIME SINCE THE LAST CEREMONY, EVIL SPIRITS HAVE BEEN ATTRACTED TO THE PILLAR. THEY HAVE MERGED INTO ONE YOUKAI.
THAT'S WHY ALL THE OTHER REMORI LEFT, ONE BY ONE.
I'M REALLY SORRY
IF IT GOES ON THIS WAY, I WILL HAVE TO LEAVE.
I DON'T THINK I CAN HELP.
I'LL TAKE YOU TO MEET THE YOUKAI.
RUSTLE
WHAT?
HEY!
FOLLOW ME.
IT'S THIS WAY.
THANK YOU, BUT I—
COME.
HUH?


WEIRD...
THE SACRED PILLAR...


THE PRINCESS SEEMS TO BE BORED.
Sigh
I WISH the sun would set already.
WE CAN TREAT HER TO MORE SAKE.


Sake, sake...
THERE! IN THE CENTER
HOORAY!
NO MORE SAKE?
Sob Sob
OH, I CAN SMELL SOME NICE SAKE
THE SMELL IS COMING FROM THERE.


OH!
BOOF!
IT'S LIKE FLOATING ON A RED CLOUD
THIS HIGH-GRADE SAKE IS STRONG AND SMELLS SO NICE.
LET'S TAKE SOME TO THE PRINCESS!
OH, THERE'S A WOMAN LYING THERE!
WATER..
I NEED WATER..
FLAP FLAP
SOME-ONE..
HELP ME..
HANG IN THERE OLD WOMAN
DRINK SOME OF THIS. IT WILL DO
WHITE TAIL
BLACK TAIL!


WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING HERE?
DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO HIDE YOURSELVES? GO AWAY!
I HAVE TO PUNISH THEM LATER
GRANNY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
Cough
PR-
PROPERTY
PROPERTY?
THANK YOU YOUNG MAN YOUR FOLLOWERS ARE VERY NICE.
Oops!
AH, TASTY
I'M SAFE.
THIS OLD WOMAN CAN SEE THEM? I'D BETTER BE CAREFUL
GOOD MORNING.
Good morning.
ON THE OTHER HAND SHE CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER HER OWN FAMILY'S FACES, SO I GUESS IT WILL BE OK.
WHEW. I'M REALLY LUCKY TODAY NO DANCING LESSON
COMING BACK LATE?
HEY, I'M GOING TO THE BANK WITH SHINYA.


AH
IS THAT YOU, RUMIKO?
GRANNY?
TSUKASA-SAN, YOU'LL TRAIN WITH SABUROU TODAY
Wobble
GRANNY_ YOU'RE SMILING!
WHY DOES YOUR HAIRSTYLE LOOK LIKE A BOY'S?
YOU RECOGNIZE ME?
GRANNY, DID YOU GET UP BY YOURSELF?
OH, HERE IT COMES.
RUMIKO, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO EAT TODAY?
I'M REALLY HUNGRY


YOUR HAIR USED TO BE SO LONG—
WAIT YOU MEAN SHE RECOGNIZED YOU EVEN THOUGH YOU CUT IT SO SHORT?
YES!
RUMI?
WHAT HAPPENED? YOU LOOK REALLY HAPPY
I AM GRANNY'S CONDITION HAS IMPROVED SHE EVEN SAID MY HAIR LOOKED LIKE A BOY'S
NO THAT'S WRONG YOU NEED TO BE LIKE THIS IN FRONT
REALLY? BUT IT WASN'T LIKE THAT YESTERDAY!
WAIT, IT SHOULD BE MORE LIKE THIS.
BAM!


WOW! YOU WERE GREAT, RUMIKO SAN!
YOU'RE SO TALENTED YOU DID THAT REALLY WELL.
NAH I'VE BEEN PRACTICING FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS.
OH.
WELL, I—
WHAT?


RUMIKO WAS SUPPOSED TO PLAY THE ROLE OF THE MAIDEN THE FOUR OF US HAD BEEN PRACTICING.
EVERYTHING WAS GOING WELL. BUT RUMIKO SUDDENLY CUT HER HAIR
DOESN'T THE MAIDEN NEED TO BE UNDER 20?
THAT'S JUST A TECHNICALITY WE DON'T REALLY WORRY ABOUT THAT THESE DAYS
BUT THE MAIDEN CAN'T HAVE SHORT HAIR, SO WE HAD TO GET SOMEONE ELSE.
WHY DID YOU CUT YOUR HAIR?
ER, WELL...
I JUST WANTED TO TRY...
SHE DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY THAT ROLE...
BUT WHY?
IT MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS.
IT'S A PHOTO I FOUND IN HER ROOM.
Ta-da
THAT'S A LIE.
SHE DID IT ON PURPOSE.


SORRY, I FELT A BIT HUNGRY
GR-
GRAND-MA?!
SO I'M EATING BY MYSELF
WHACK!
Going into a girl's room like that
YOU'D THINK SHE'D WANT TO DANCE WITH HER BOYFRIEND
ISN'T THIS ONE OF THE DANCERS? KEISUKE?
OH.
WHERE'S YOUR DIAPER?
IT WAS UNCOMFORTABLE, SO I TOOK IT OFF
Y-YOU MEAN YOU WALKED TO THE KITCHEN BY YOURSELF?
I SUDDENLY WANTED VEGETABLES AND SAUCE.
Chomp Chomp
EATING CONGEE MADE ME HUNGRY
AH, NOW I'M FULL!
Dash
OH!
BE CAREFUL!


YOUNG LADY, ARE YOU GOING TO BE THE MAIDEN?
GOOD LUCK.
OH, YOU'RE THAT YOUNG MAN FROM YESTERDAY
THANK YOUR LITTLE FOLLOWERS FOR ME PLEASE.
OH, I'M SO FULL. PLEASE TELL JUNKO SAN THAT I DON'T WANT ANY SUPPER
GOOD NIGHT
Chirp
Chirp
Chirp
I NEVER IMAGINED THIS WOULD HAPPEN
SHOULD WE CALL A DOCTOR TO HAVE A LOOK AT MOTHER?
GRANNY'S CONDITION IS IMPROVING THE MEDICINE IS WORKING.
NONSENSE IT WOULD MAKE SENSE TO CALL ONE IF HER CONDITION WORSENED BUT WHY SHOULD WE WHEN SHE'S IMPROVING?
GRANDMA!


IMPOSSIBLE! HOW CAN WE SELL THE HOUSE? OUR ANCESTORS GENERATION AFTER GENERATION HAVE PROTECTED THE SACRED PILLAR
YOU'RE AWAKE? BREAKFAST WILL BE READY IN A MINUTE.
THE ELDERLY WAKE UP EARLY I'M HUNGRY
HOW ARE WE GOING TO PAY OUR DEBTS?
AREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO THOUGHT IT WAS A BURDEN? YOU DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO HOLD THE CEREMONY!
SHINYA! ICHIROU!
EVEN IF WE HAVE TO TAKE IT TO COURT—
DON'T BE SO HIGH-HANDED JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY
WHEN MOTHER DIES I HAVE A RIGHT TO THE INHERITANCE, TOO!
WHY DO YOU THINK WE HOLD THE PILLAR FESTIVAL?
M-
MOTHER...
WHAT ARE YOU TWO ARGUING ABOUT SO EARLY IN THE MORNING?

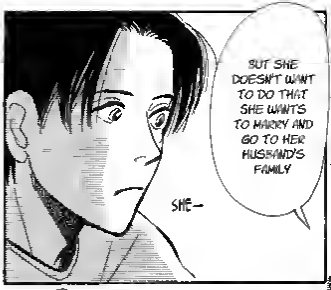

IT SHOULD BE A CEREMONY ABOUT PEACE BETWEEN BROTHERS, RIGHT?
YES!!
ISN'T THE CEREMONY ABOUT FATHERS, SONS, BROTHERS, AND THE WHOLE FAMILY BEING TOGETHER?
ARGUING ABOUT THE INHERITANCE WHILE I'M STILL ALIVE! AREN'T YOU ASHAMED?
UHH...
MOTHER, YOU'VE RECOVERED I THOUGHT YOU COULDN'T EVEN STAND
IT'S SO WONDERFUL.
IDIOT! STOP THAT CRYING YOU'RE AN ADULT!
IT'S UNBELIEVABLE.
TWO DAYS AGO, I WASN'T EVEN ABLE TO TURN OVER IN MY FUTON
EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE ONCE THE CEREMONY IS OVER.


THE SACRED PILLAR HAS GIVEN ITS BLESSING TO GRANNY
IT MUST BE A BLESSING OF THE CEREMONY
DOESN'T ANYONE
...FEEL THE TENSING OF THE ATMOSPHERE IN THIS HOUSE?
THIS IS THE FAMILY STAMP AND THE DEED TO THE MOUNTAIN LAND
LET'S SELL THE LAND AND PAY THE DEBTS.
WHY DID YOU REMOVE THE TATAMI?
I FOUND IT, GRANNY


YOU BOYS HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT THE PROPERTY TAX
SCOLD
BUT ISN'T THERE A FIELD IN OOTAWARA?
ORDER
LISTEN, YOU CAN'T SELL THE HOUSE.
SCOLD
MOTHER...
ORDER
SOMETHING STRANGE IS GOING ON
STRANGE..
HMMM...
ORDER
SCOLD
SELL HALF THE LAND AND TURN THE OTHER HALF INTO CASH
SWING!
KAH!
THEY WANT SPEED HUH
Whoosh
BETTER LOTS OF IMPROVEMENT FROM FIVE DAYS AGO
UNCLE!
Sure!
RIGHT, RIGHT, THAT'S MORE LIKE IT
SEE, IT LACKS CONVICTION
SPEED UP AT THAT POINT


ISN'T IT BORING TO JUST WATCH THEM PRACTICE EVERY DAY?
I WAS WORRIED THERE FOR A WHILE. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO DO IT. BUT NOW I FEEL REASSURED
IT'S UNUSUAL TO GET A COMPLIMENT FROM UNCLE.
YOU DON'T OFTEN GET TO VISIT THE COUNTRYSIDE.
YOU SHOULD DO SOMETHING YOU CAN'T DO IN TOWN.
KUWA KUWA
KUWA KUWA
KUWA KUWA
ER...
HAVE YOU EVER GONE NIGHT FISHING?
BOYS YOUR AGE SHOULD HAVE AN ADVENTURE LIKE THIS.


I'M AN ONLY CHILD
SPlash...
HOW MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS DO YOU HAVE?
IF I HAD HAD A SON, I WOULD HAVE MADE HIM COME OFTEN
Burbl
Burbl


SHE—
BUT SHE DOESN'T WANT TO DO THAT SHE WANTS TO MARRY AND GO TO HER HUSBAND'S FAMILY


ONLY CHILD... SAME AS MY FAMILY. BUT WE HAD A GIRL.
SHE WAS SO OBEDIENT WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD. BUT SOMEHOW SHE'S BECOME VERY HEADSTRONG.
TRADITIONALLY, AN ONLY CHILD HAS HAD TO INHERIT THE FAMILY BUSINESS


BY THE WAY ARE YOU GOING TO MARRY TSUKASA-SAN?
OF COURSE NOT!


REALLY? THEN DOES SHE HAVE A BOYFRIEND?
OH
I DON'T KNOW.


Is he looking for a second wife, or what?
WHAT IS THIS OLD MAN THINKING?
I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'D WANT TO LIVE IN THE COUNTRY
SHE'S A GOOD GIRL..
EXCUSE ME A MOMENT
REST-ROOM?
AH...
THE CEREMONY IS APPROACHING AND THE YOUKAI HAS CALLED IN SOME COMRADES.
ITS POWER IS GROWING. THERE IS NO ROOM IN THE HOUSE FOR ME ANYMORE.
YOU'RE LEAVING?
HEY!


IF THE SITUATION CHANGES, I MIGHT COME BACK ONE DAY
WITH NO GUARDIAN SPIRITS IN THE HOUSE, THE FAMILY IS GOING TO END.
I'M LETTING IT GO THE BIGGEST ONE IS FOR THE DRAGON GOD
SEE YOU.
Splash
THE SMALLEST IS FOR THE LAKE MASTER
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
IT'S ANCIENT CUSTOM.
IT MAY SEEM SILLY...
...BUT IT'S IMPORTANT IF YOU LIVE HERE.


SLIDE
EXCUSE ME..
WAHH!
SHH.. DON'T BE AFRAID
I NEED YOUR HELP


GRANNY LEFT A LETTER AND DISAPPEARED!
OH, MY GOSH!
"DON'T WORRY I MIGHT COME BACK FOR THE CEREMONY"
THAT SILLY OLD WOMAN!
"IT'S BEEN HARD TO RECOVER BUT NOW I REALIZE ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN THE END WILL COME"
"I INTEND TO TRAVEL AS A TESTAMENT TO LIFE."
W-WAIT! IT WOULD BE CRUEL TO BRING HER BACK SO SOON. SHE'S BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH
CALL THE POLICE!
SHE CAN'T GO OFF ON HER OWN EVEN IF SHE HAS RECOVERED
THEY'RE ALL ABNORMAL.
DON'T THEY THINK THIS IS ALL VERY STRANGE?
SAY, RITSU.
HOW CAN WE LET HER RECKLESSLY WANDER AROUND THE COUNTRY-SIDE?
AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL EVENING


—
SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL MUST HAVE HAPPENED
TWO OR THREE DAYS AGO, SHE COULDN'T EVEN REMEMBER HER FAMILY'S FACES.
AND THEN SHE SUDDENLY RECOVERS AND GOES OFF TRAVELING IT'S VERY STRANGE.
AREN'T YOU HOT IN HERE? I BROUGHT YOU SOME ONIGIRI."
THANK YOU.
IT'S ME. PLEASE OPEN THE DOOR
FOOD DRINKS
IF MY SHOES WERE STILL THERE, THEY'D SUSPECT SOMETHING.
BUT THESE ARE JUNKO'S. OH, WELL.
THAT WAS A GOOD THOUGHT.
I TOOK YOUR SHOES FROM THE ENTRANCE.


EVERYONE WAS HAPPY ABOUT MY RAPID RECOVERY..
MOST OF ALL ME
BUT I CAN'T LET THEM SEE ME IN THIS STATE.
THEY WERE ALL PANICKING, BUT THEY DECIDED TO WAIT UNTIL EVENING BEFORE CALLING THE POLICE.
HMM, WHAT A MESS.
I CAN'T ASK YOU TO HIDE ME FOREVER
BUT I HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE FUTURE.
NOBODY WILL FIND ME HERE..
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT CAUSED THIS PHENOMENON?
I CAN ONLY THINK OF ONE REASON..
JUST TAKE SOME TIME TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS..
THEN THINK ABOUT A SOLUTION


HUH? RITSU ISN'T HERE?
HE USUALLY WATCHES ME.
IT'S ME. I'M OPENING THE DOOR.
GRANDMA MUST HAVE GONE OFF WITH MY SHOES.
DO YOU KNOW WHICH KIMONO SHE WAS WEARING?
SHE ALSO TOOK A BAG A BIT OF MONEY, AND SOME OTHER STUFF
RING——!
GR-GRANDMA?!
WHERE ARE YOU?!
ばこ
SORRY I MADE YOU WORRY I HAD A SUDDEN IMPULSE.
I'M AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE IN HOKKAIDO
YES. AN OLD FRIEND FROM SCHOOL.
HER NAME? YAMADA-SAN


CLICK...
THAT SHOULD TAKE CARE OF THE MOST IMMEDIATE PROBLEM.
I'M SORRY I'M GOING TO STAY HERE FOR A WHILE.
YOU HAD US WORRIED SICK! WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO CALL THE POLICE.
THE WEATHER IS REALLY NICE.
MY HAIR'S A MESS.
GRANNY!
AGE MAKES US NEGLIGENT
YOU'RE EVEN YOUNGER THAN THIS MORNING.
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? NOBODY CAN RECOGNIZE ME NOW
YES. NO MORE GRAY HAIR
FINALLY, I FOUND YOU. WHY ARE YOU OUT HERE?


EVEN THE NEIGHBORS WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE ME
I MUST LOOK ABOUT FORTY RIGHT?
WE MUST LOOK LIKE A MOTHER AND HER SON WALKING TOGETHER
OR MAYBE A COUPLE WITH A BIG AGE GAP?
AT THIS RATE YOU'LL LOOK LIKE YOU'RE MY YOUNGER SISTER TOMORROW
THIS NEIGHBORHOOD HAS CHANGED A LOT. LET'S LOOK AROUND BEFORE GOING HOME
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HAS IN STORE FOR ME, BUT RIGHT NOW, IT FEELS GOOD TO BE ABLE TO WALK ON MY OWN TWO LEGS.
YAMADA-SAN? FROM HOKKAIDO?
I'M TRYING TO FIND HER OLD SCHOOL RECORDS
DID SHE SAY WHEN SHE'S COMING BACK?
LET'S WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE CEREMONY
IN MY OPINION YOU SHOULD STILL CALL THE POLICE.


WHAT? BECAUSE YOU DRANK SAKE?
HAVE MERCY ON US, YOUNG MASTER WE JUST WANTED TO COMFORT THE PRINCESS
THAT WAS WHEN I MET YOUR FOLLOWERS
THAT'S THE ONLY REASON I CAN THINK OF
WHERE DID YOU FIND THAT SAKE?
WHITE TAIL! BLACK TAIL!
I WAS REALLY THIRSTY SO I DRAGGED MYSELF INTO THE HALL.
IT'S FILLED WITH HIGH GRADE SAKE.
IN HERE.
WE EXTRACTED A RIDICULOUSLY SMALL AMOUNT USING OUR MAGIC.
IN THE POLE?


SAKE INSIDE THE PILLAR?
IT'S NOT JUST A FAIRY TALE. THE SACRED PILLAR REALLY DRINKS SAKE.
THE SAKE WE OFFER BEFORE THE CEREMONY ALWAYS DECREASES A LITTLE.
IS THAT SO? YOU PERFORMED THE DANCE?
THAT WAS THE CASE WHEN I PLAYED THE MAIDEN
IT'S THE DIVINE SABER THAT THE SWORDS-WOMAN USES.
YES, WITH THIS.
AND WHEN IT WAS RUMIKO'S MOTHER'S TURN TOO
BUT...
IT'S A REAL SWORD!
WHY USE SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
IT'S SO DANGEROUS
WELL THIS CEREMONY ISN'T ORDINARY IT DETERMINES THE FUTURE OF THE FAMILY
TRY TO WALK AROUND THIS PILLAR WHILE HOLDING THE SWORD


Slap
Slap
THERE'S SOMETHING HERE OF ME...
SOMETHING LURKING AROUND THE PILLAR.
WATCH OUT! BEHIND YOU!
COULD IT BE THE YOUKAI THE IEMORI WAS TALKING ABOUT?


WHOA!
Thud!
WHA—?
I CAN'T LET TSUKASA-CHAN DO THE DANCE!


TOMORROW'S THE BIG DAY.
WHEN IT'S OVER I'LL TAKE YOU ON A GUIDED TOUR OF THE AREA.
Try yours on too
THESE ARE THE CLOTHES SHE'LL BE WEARING TOMORROW
Clap
Clap
Wow!
WONDER-FUL!
HERE. TAKE THIS.
DURING PRACTICE WE USE A WOODEN SWORD TO AVOID ACCIDENTS. BUT WE USE THIS ONE FOR THE CEREMONY
WHOA! IT'S HEAVY!
YEP. IT'S A REAL SABER
WELL, I HEARD THERE WERE SOME CASUALTIES IN THE PAST
BUT I'VE NEVER USED A SWORD IN MY LIFE. IT'LL BE DANGEROUS!


YOU MUST HAVE SUFFERED DAD IS SO STRICT USUALLY, THE PREVIOUS MAIDEN TEACHES THE NEW ONE.
BUT MOM PASSED AWAY, AND GRANNY WAS BEDRIDDEN
Hahaha!
WE KNOW HOW TO DODGE
DON'T WORRY ABOUT US.
THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR IF YOU'RE THE ONE USING IT
Uhh...
THE TRUTH IS, THIS WAS QUITE A DANGEROUS FESTIVAL WAY BACK THEN
Wahh!
MY FATHER AND UNCLE ARE THE ONLY ONES LEFT WHO REMEMBER THE CHOREOGRAPHY
WHAT? RUMIKO'S MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER WERE THE PREVIOUS MAIDENS?
BACK THEN THE MAIDENS WERE FIFTEEN AND GOT MARRIED RIGHT AFTER THE CEREMONY
WELL, YEAH... THAT'S THE WAY IT WAS DONE IN THE OLD DAYS BUT NOW IT DOESN'T MATTER
THAT MEANS IT'S BEEN THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW'S JOB TO PLAY THE MAIDEN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION?
WAIT A MINUTE..


THE CEREMONY WAS ACTUALLY AN ENGAGEMENT PARTY
AFTER PERFORMING THE DANCE
THE MAIDEN WAS OFFERED TO THE SACRED PILLAR TO BECOME THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT OF THE HOUSE.
IT'S BECAUSE OF KEISUKE-SAN
HE'S GOT BROTHERS BUT HE'S THE ONE IN LINE TO BECOME THE HEAD OF HIS FAMILY
BUT THAT'S JUST AN OUTDATED CUSTOM.
THAT'S HOW MY GRANDMOTHER AND MOTHER ENTERED THE SANO FAMILY
YOU, TOO IF YOU REFUSED TO CONTINUE THE TRADITION—
I SEE WHY NO GIRLS FROM THE AREA OFFERED TO PLAY THE MAIDEN'S ROLE
HE WANTS ME TO MARRY RYOUICHI
BUT DAD IS BEING OBSTINATE BECAUSE HE DOESN'T WANT SOMEONE FROM THE YOUNGER BRANCH TO BECOME THE HEAD
DAD'S AGAINST OUR MARRIAGE BECAUSE HE CAN'T ADOPT HIM.
IN MY OPINION, RYOUICHI, UNCLE SHINYA'S SON SHOULD BECOME THE FAMILY'S HEAD THAT WAY I COULD MARRY IN PEACE.
WHAT?! BUT RYOUICHI IS ONLY IN MIDDLE SCHOOL!


HEY, HOLD ON..
YOU'RE FROM THE FAMILY, BUT REMOTE ENOUGH NOT TO BECOME INVOLVED WHEREAS IF I WERE TO PERFORM I'D IMMEDIATELY GET SUCKED IN
HE'D SAY ANYTHING JUST TO GET HIS WAY
EXACTLY! HE'S ONLY 14 BUT DAD SAYS TEN YEARS DIFFERENCE IN AGE IS NOTHING.
DOESN'T AN OUTSIDER ALWAYS PLAY THE MAIDEN'S ROLE?
DOES THAT MEAN YOUR FATHER WANTS TO USE ME TO SETTLE THE INHERITANCE MATTER?
..IF YOU ACCEPTED THEN—
AND DAD SEEMS TO LIKE YOU, SO..
WELL YOU'RE ONLY FIVE YEARS OLDER THAN RYOUICHI,
STOP!
I DON'T WANT TO PERFORM THE CEREMONY!


IT'S THE FALL FESTIVAL IN THE VILLAGE WE'LL GO ONCE WE'RE DONE HERE.
IT'S LIVELY.
Boom...
Boom
boom
Boom
Boom...
WHERE COULD RITSU BE?
Poke Poke
HE'S NEVER AROUND WHEN I NEED HIM.
WOW IT'S CROWDED
ALL THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE FROM THE VILLAGE ARE GATHERED HERE.
YES. WE USED TO BE AN INFLUENTIAL FAMILY AROUND HERE.


Tap Tap Boom
IT STARTS NOW
Boom
LONG AGO THIS CEREMONY WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE COMMUNITY
WHAM!
Tap Tap Tap
Boom Boboom
YES SHE SEEMS MORE AT EASE THAN DURING THE RE-HEARSALS.
TSUKASA-SAN IS DOING GREAT
BAM!


WHAT POSE IS THAT?
I'VE NEVER SEEN HER MOVE THAT FAST, EITHER
THAT WASN'T PART OF THE CHORE-OGRAPHY!
WHOOSH!!
ARG!
IT'S LIKE I'M WATCHING MOTHER
THAT... THAT'S IT...
THOSE ARE THE RIGHT MOVEMENTS

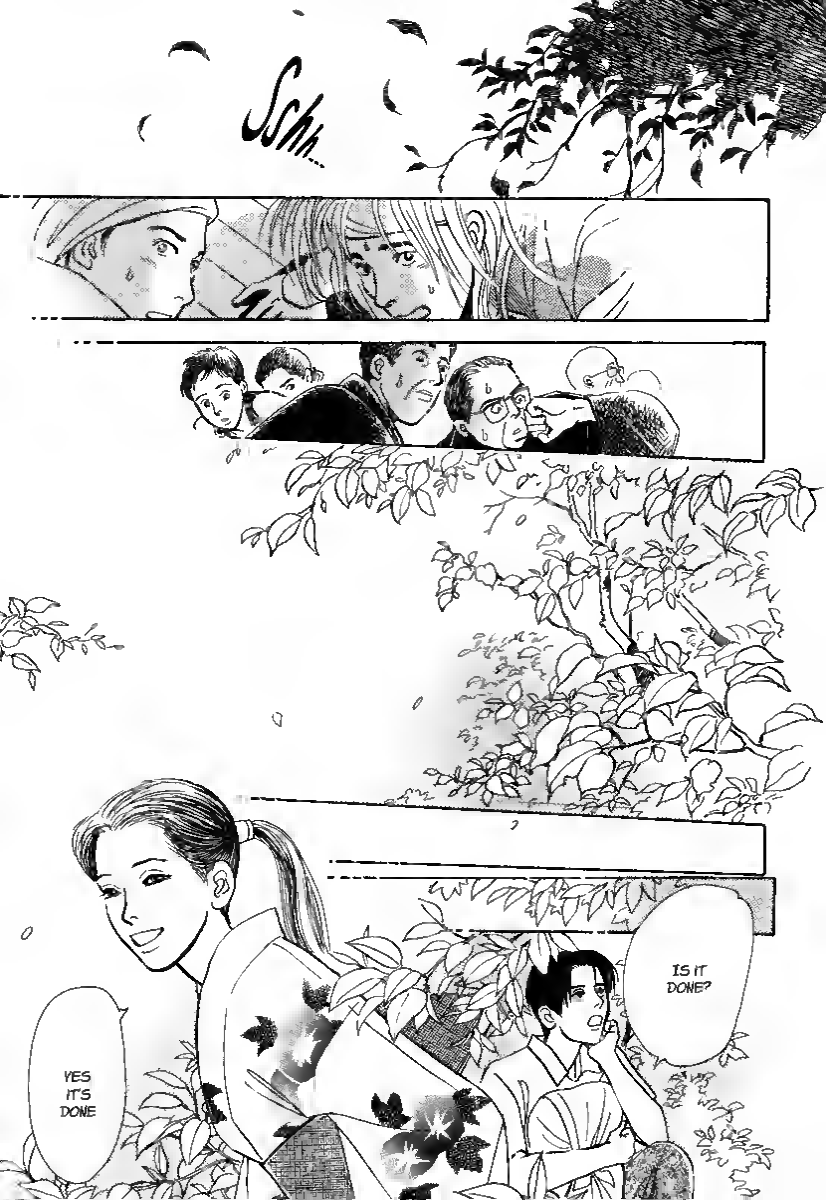

OH…
IT ALREADY STARTED
HERE YOU ARE.
Shock
TSUKASA-SAN?!
THEN, WHO IS SHE?!
HUH?
I THINK…
THERE'S AN ADDITIONAL DANCER
HE'S MISSING A HAND… IT'S HIM!






STAB


WHOOSH
WAAA HI!
RATTLERATTLE...!
WHOOM


Sshh...
IS IT DONE?
YES IT'S DONE

*Yukata—informal kimono (usually made of cotton or linen), often worn at summer festivals.




IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE MEDICINE I'D ALREADY BE DEAD
ACTUALLY I SHOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD BY NOW
THAT'S ALSO MY IMPRESSION
IT LOOKS TO ME AS IF THE SACRED PILLAR LENT ME ITS FORCE...
...SO I COULD HELP MY FAMILY ONE LAST TIME.
...FINALLY ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION TO MARRY
RUMIKO-SAN AND KEISUKE-SAN...
NO, THEY'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A FAMILY MEETING.
SO DID YOU GET YELLED AT?


PEOPLE AREN'T WILLING TO SACRIFICE THEMSELVES THESE DAYS.
WHAT?
HEY, GO PACK YOUR STUFF THE BUS LEAVES AT 6:30
ALL HIS ARGUMENTS ABOUT FAMILY, REMOTE BRANCHES AND OTHER SUCCESSION MATTERS ARE TOO OLD-FASHIONED
I THINK UNCLE WILL HAVE TO GIVE IN
Whisper
WELL...
BY THE WAY, DO YOU KNOW WHO DANCED IN MY PLACE?
SHE WAS WEARING A YUKATA WITH RED FLOWERS.
NO, NO ONE.
EXCUSE ME. DID YOU SEE A YOUNG WOMAN HERE?
SHE WENT THAT WAY.
I WAS WONDERING WHY SHE WAS WEARING A YUKATA TWICE HER SIZE. BUT IT WAS A RED-FLOWERED ONE.
OH, THAT LITTLE GIRL?
WE DON'T HAVE TIME. WE CAN SEND THEM A POST-CARD
WE'RE NOT EVEN SAYING GOOD-BYE? IT'S A BIT RUDE
Wait!


OH.
A BIG
FIREFLY
SWOOSH
HMM?
AH.


THE ROOM BRIGHTENED SUDDENLY
SAY, RITSU..
YEAH..
I'M SURE UNCLE KNEW HER
DON'T YOU THINK THE DANCER RESEMBLED RUMIKO-SAN?
AT THE END OF SUMMER GRANNY SANO WENT MISSING..
SOMETIME AFTERWARD HER TRAVEL BAG WAS FOUND IN THE ROOM I STAYED IN
NOBODY EVER ASKED ABOUT IT

The Cannibal's Garden

It's strange that there's no bridge across this stream.

We should build one.

That's true. The hut can't be reached.

Slide

The Cannibal's Garden

Translation & scans: Ink
Editing: Ink + help from Wolf
Proofreading: Conner

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Sshhh
EXCUSE ME
DO YOU KNOW THE WAY TO THE NEAREST HOTEL?
Sshhh
HM?
I'M HOME
WE HAVE A GUEST I INVITED HIM TO STAY HERE TONIGHT
OH, PLEASE COME IN
I'M AOYANAGI.
BLUE STORM OFFERING LODGING TO A HUMAN ...


I'M REALLY SORRY TO DISTURB YOU AT THIS LATE HOUR
...THAT'S SOMETHING TO NOTE
WHO IS HE? DO YOU KNOW HIM?
HE HASN'T SOCIALIZED WITH ANYONE SINCE HIS HEART ATTACK.
I HOPE YOU'LL BECOME FRIENDS.
NOT AT ALL. IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THAT MY HUSBAND BRINGS HOME A GUEST
NOPE.
HE'S SO PALE AND SEEMS TENSE.
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S AFRAID OF SOMETHING.
I HOPE HE'S NOT A CRIMINAL— A MURDERER OR THIEF ON THE RUN.


THERE'S NO TV IN THIS ROOM
WHAT ARE THESE VOICES?
Whisper
Whisper
Whisper
TWO MORE LEFT
THANK YOU FOR THE BATH I'M GOING TO BED NOW.
Pull
I'M SCARED
Whisper
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE WORRIED ABOUT AS LONG AS THERE'S NO BRIDGE
THERE'S NO ONE
GOOD NIGHT THEN
Whisper...
Whisper...
Rattle...
Whisper...
Whisper...
Whisper...
Rattle...
?


OH, SORRY DID I SCARE YOU?
BAM!
WAH!
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY TO BE HONEST, I DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO STAY IN A HOTEL ROOM
OH, YOU'RE VERY WELCOME.
YOU SEEM TO BE AFRAID OF WHAT'S INSIDE.
I'M THINKING YOU WERE GOING TO ABANDON IT IN A HOTEL ROOM
WHAT?
BUT IF YOU REALLY WANT TO THANK ME,
MAYBE YOU COULD GIVE ME THAT BOX.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, WHY NOT LEAVE IT WITH ME?


DON'T WORRY, I HAVE MY OWN LITTLE IDEAS
THAT'S WHY I'M OFFERING TO RELIEVE YOU OF IT
AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE.
IT'S SOMETHING TERRIFYING...

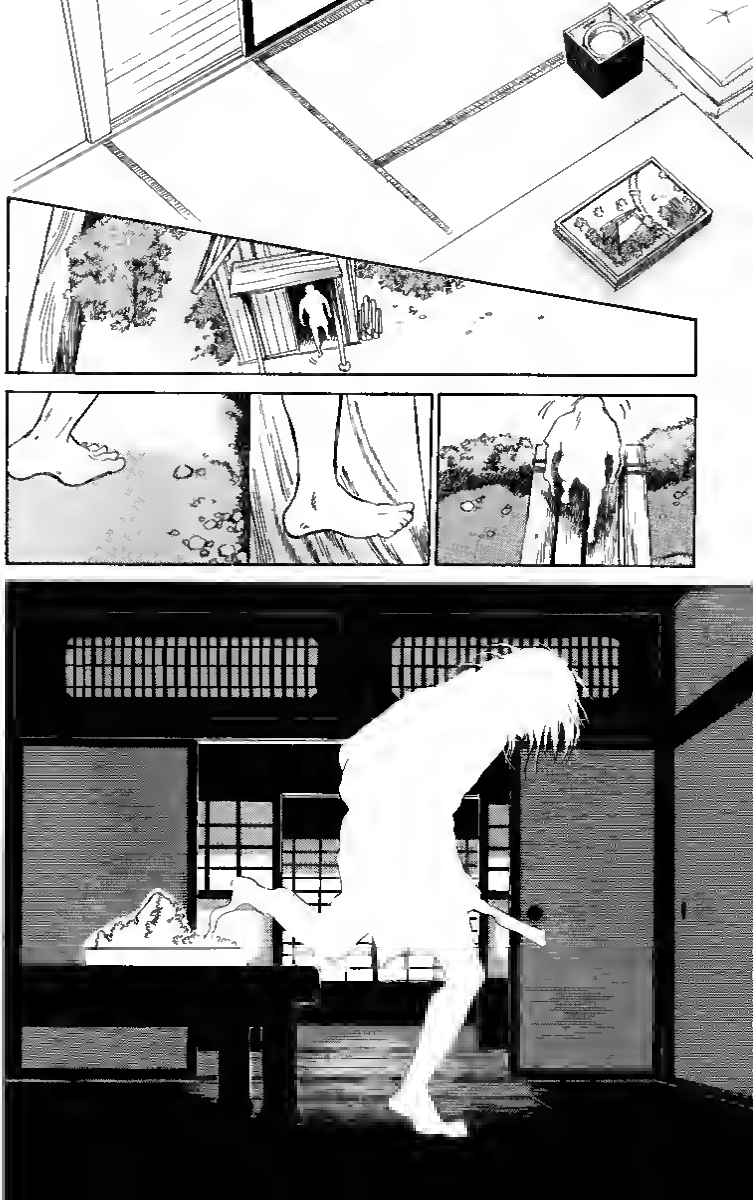

IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M ASKING YOU WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE OF IT
H-HOW DO YOU—?
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN WANDERING AROUND FOR SEVERAL DAYS WITHOUT KNOWING HOW TO GET RID OF IT
JUST LEAVE IT HERE.


HOW CAN WE GET ACROSS WITHOUT GETTING WET?
WHY ISN'T THERE A BRIDGE ACROSS THE STREAM?
SOMEONE IS COMING TOWARD ME.
NO...
I HAVE TO WAKE UP...
...BEFORE HE ARRIVES.
WE HAVE TO FIND HIM AND GIVE IT BACK.
WHAT BOX?
HOW? WE HAVE NO IDEA WHERE HE'S GONE.
AOYANAGI-SAN IS GONE!
DEAR!
COME QUICKLY!
IT'S OK. HE LEFT THE BOX.

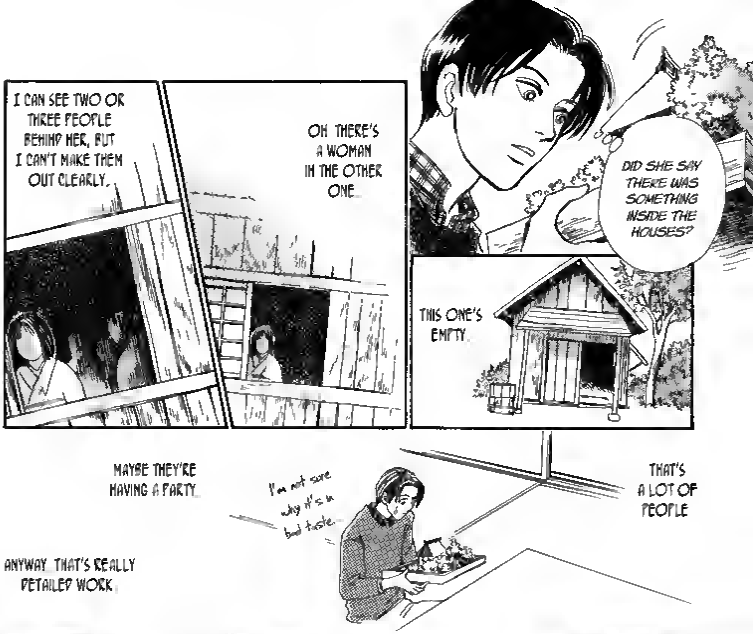

OH! A MINIATURE GARDEN!
IT'S VERY BEAUTIFUL. LOOKS LIKE AN ANTIQUE.
WHAT DETAILED WORKMANSHIP
THAT LANDSCAPE...
WE SHOULD TURN IT INTO THE LOST AND FOUND OFFICE.
...IS THE SAME AS IN MY DREAM
OH, THAT'S STRANGE. THERE'S NO BRIDGE ACROSS THE STREAM.
LET'S KEEP IT FOR A FEW DAYS AND SEE IF HE COMES BACK TO GET IT
REALLY IT'S BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED
JUDGING BY THESE MARKS, THERE USED TO BE ONE.
MAYBE IT CAME OFF I'LL LOOK AROUND FOR IT.
IT IS BEAUTIFUL...
...BUT IT GIVES ME AN UNPLEASANT FEELING


OH IT'S A BRIDGE!
DONE!
MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T TOUCH IT SINCE IT DOESN'T BELONG TO US.
WE'RE NOT HURTING IT BESIDES, IT LOOKS STRANGE WITHOUT A BRIDGE. IT'S LIKE THE PEOPLE IN THE TWO HOUSES HAVE CUT ALL TIES.
I MADE IT WITH WOOD STICKS
YOU DID A GOOD JOB
LET'S SEE HOW IT FITS
TOSSI
AH, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WHOA!
THUD
WELL?
YOU'RE RIGHT IT LOOKS BETTER LIKE THAT


CLOSE!
IT CAN'T BE HELPED
I GOT FRIGHTENED I THOUGHT I SAW SOMEONE INSIDE THE HUT
BE CAREFUL. YOU MIGHT HAVE BROKEN IT
IT'S NOT OURS
AOK! A STONE CAME LOOSE
ANYWAY, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING INSIDE.
-?
...BUT ACTUALLY, I DON'T LIKE IT MUCH
NO, IT'S STILL IN THE LIVING ROOM.
THAT MINIATURE GARDEN IS REALLY PRETTY..
I'M HOME!
DID THAT MAN COME BACK FOR HIS BOX?
?
I DON'T KNOW WHOSE IDEA IT WAS
BUT IT WAS BAD TASTE TO PUT THOSE KINDS OF THINGS INSIDE THE LITTLE HOUSES



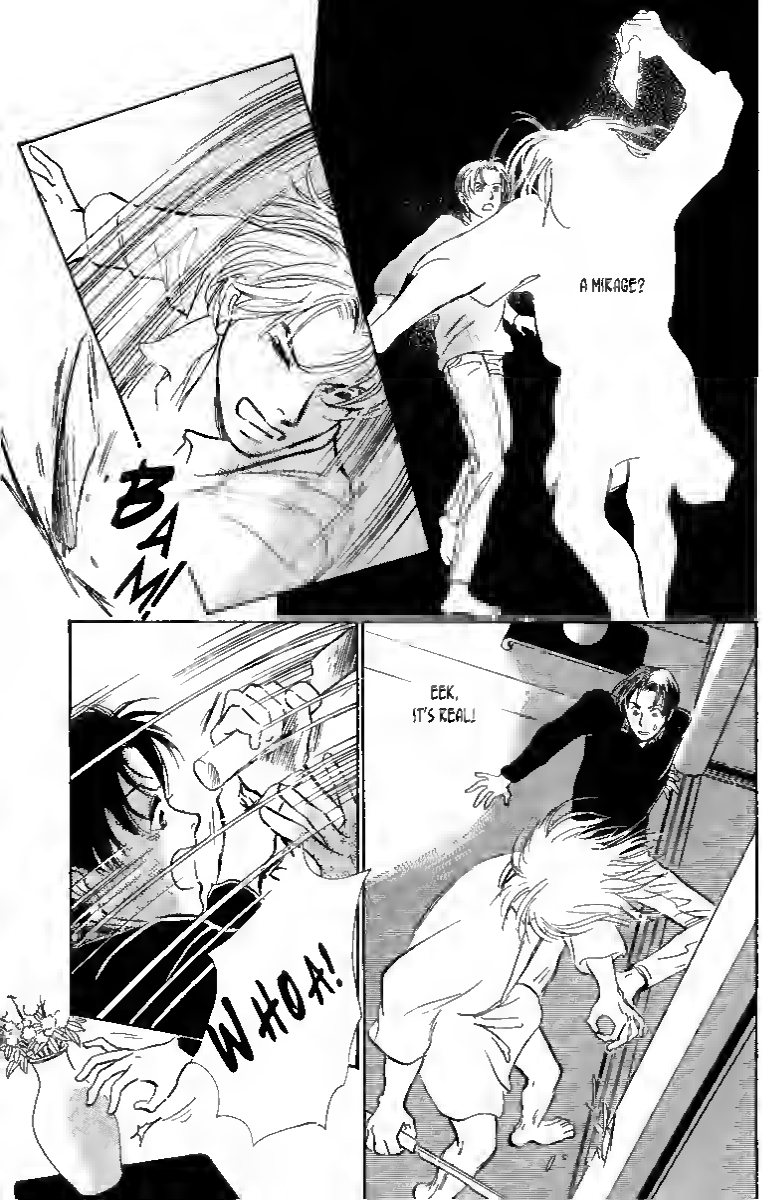

HELLO
THIS IS AOYANAGI
WHAT? YOU GAVE THE BOX TO SOMEONE? I TOLD YOU TO BRING IT TO ME!
I GOT SCARED, AND THIS MAN INSISTED ON HAVING IT.
DO YOU HAVE HIS NAME?
?
YES, IT'S IIJIMA I HAVE HIS ADDRESS, TOO
YOU HAVE TO GET THAT GARDEN BACK! JUST GETTING RID OF IT DOESN'T MAKE YOU SAFE.
I WONDER ABOUT WHAT MOM SAID, THOUGH
IT'S PICTURESQUE

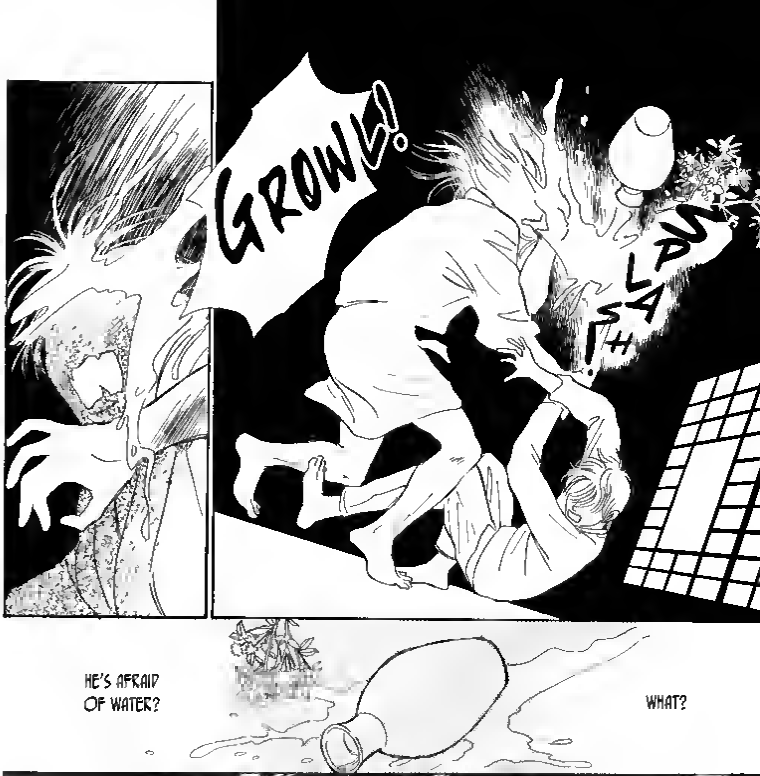

I CAN SEE TWO OR THREE PEOPLE BEHIND HER, BUT I CAN'T MAKE THEM OUT CLEARLY.
OH. THERE'S A WOMAN IN THE OTHER ONE.
DID SHE SAY THERE WAS SOMETHING INSIDE THE HOUSES?
THIS ONE'S EMPTY.
MAYBE THEY'RE HAVING A PARTY.
I'm not sure why it's in bad taste.
THAT'S A LOT OF PEOPLE
ANYWAY, THAT'S REALLY DETAILED WORK.


Tap
Tap
Tap
Tap


NOW...
THERE'S ONLY ONE LEFT
MOM'S RIGHT. THAT THING IS CREEPY
I'M HEARING VOICES AGAIN...
HUH?
SOMEONE PUT IN A BRIDGE.
MOM?
Pssst


WHAT IS THIS?
A HALLU-CINATION?


A MIRAGE?
BAM!
EEK, IT'S REAL!
WHOA!

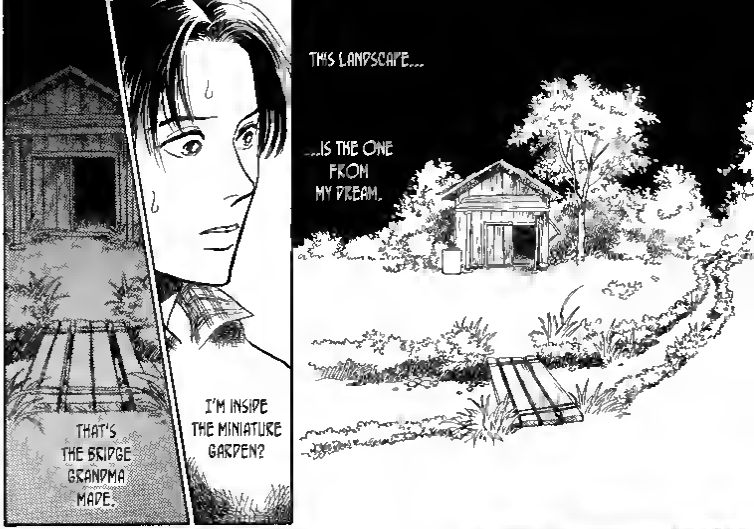


HE'S AFRAID OF WATER?

WHAT?




THUD
AHHH!!
KUH?
WHERE...
...AM I?


I'M INSIDE THE MINIATURE GARDEN?
THAT'S THE BRIDGE GRANDMA MADE.
THIS LANDSCAPE....
...IS THE ONE FROM MY DREAM.


Crunch
Crunch
Crunch
Crunch



*youma = generic term for ghost spirit, or demon, usually evil


OH.. SHH! HE'S BACK.
Rustle..
THE BRIDGE!
IT'S THE BRIDGE THAT ALLOWS HIM TO GET OUT!
WE HAVE TO REMOVE IT RIGHT NOW!
IT'S A BIT LATE. HE'S GONE NOW
LOOKS LIKE HE'S SEARCHING FOR SOMEONE.
THOSE ARE THE PEOPLE HE ATE.
THEY'RE STUCK HERE BECAUSE THEY CAN'T GO TO HEAVEN


THIS MINIATURE GARDEN REALLY IS ALIVE.
THE ARTISAN MUST HAVE BEEN EXCEPTIONAL. HE PUT ALL HIS SOUL INTO IT.
HE MADE IT SO WELL, THE GARDEN CAME ALIVE..
WELL, LET'S GO BACK.
Grab
..AND THIS CREATURE SETTLED HERE
IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD TO TRY TO BURN OR DESTROY THIS MINIATURE
IT'S PROTECTED BY A GREAT SPIRITUAL FORCE.
BUT WE CAN'T HAVE A CANNIBAL HERE!
DON'T WORRY YOU KNOW I'M ALWAYS HERE TO PROTECT YOU.
BOOM!!


YOU WEREN'T HERE EARLIER
YEAH, RIGHT
HEY!
HEY.
I WONDER IF HE'LL ESCAPE.
STILL ONE LEFT
Psst
Psst
HEY!
SLIDE


A STONE.
LISTEN TO ME!
HEY, WAIT!
WHAT..?
THE MINIATURE GARDEN?
I'M FROM THE MINIATURE GARDEN A WOMAN FROM THIS HOUSE TOSSED ME HERE!
I HAVE TO GO BACK!
I'M NOT A STONE! I ONLY LOOK LIKE THIS IN THIS WORLD
I'M NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN HEARING ANYTHING FROM A STONE.
I'm sorry, it's cold.
WHERE ARE YOU FROM?
THANKS FOR BRINGING THAT DAWN GARDEN HERE, BLUE STORM.

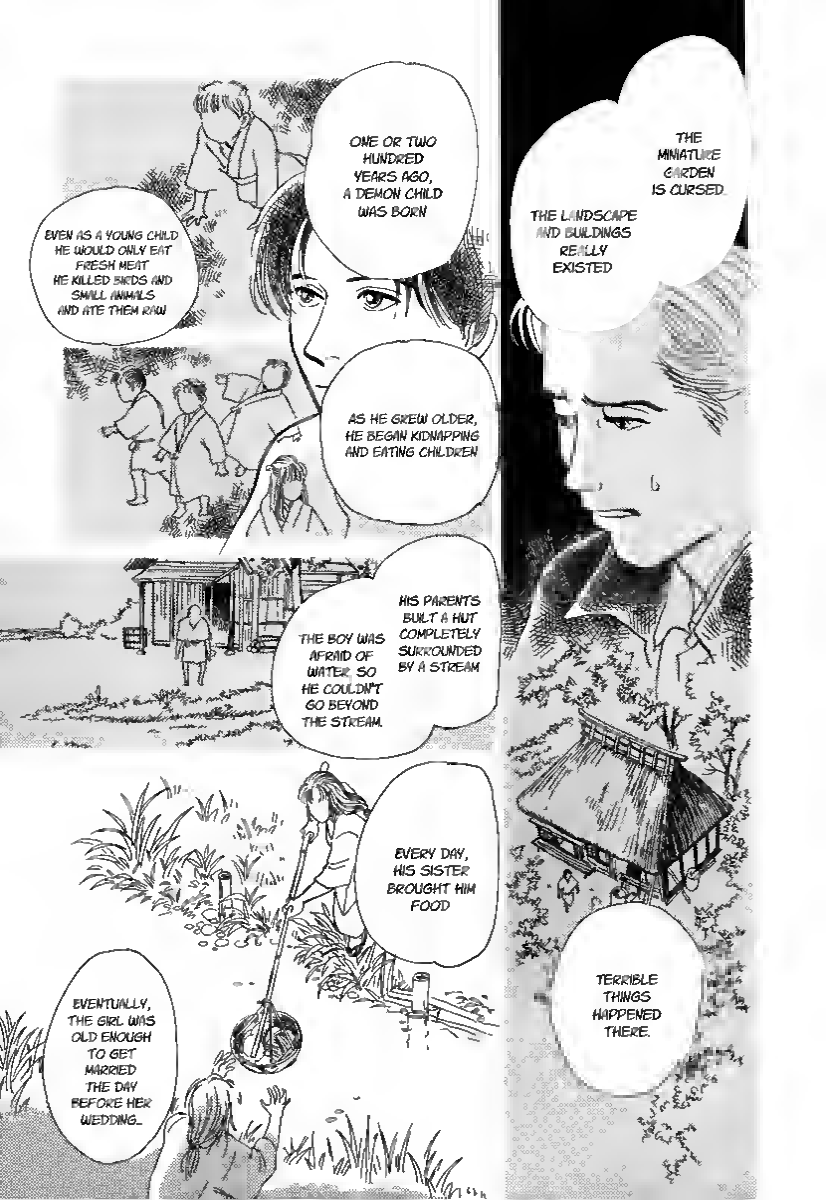

CURSES! EVERYTHING IS BIGGER IN THIS WORLD!
WELL, YOU SEEM A LITTLE TOO LARGE TO GET IN
WHAT HAPPENED? I CAN'T GO IN!
SLAM!
THERE IT IS!
WHAT CAN I DO TO GO BACK?
BONG
BONG!
BONG!
HEY, STOP IT
IT'S NOT A YOUMA— I DON'T FEEL ANY EVIL AURA.
WHAT ARE YOU EXACTLY?
NO IDEA! MY THOUGHTS AREN'T CLEAR NOW THAT I'M OUT HERE.
BUT I ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO GET BACK IN THERE!
HMM
AH, WHAT—

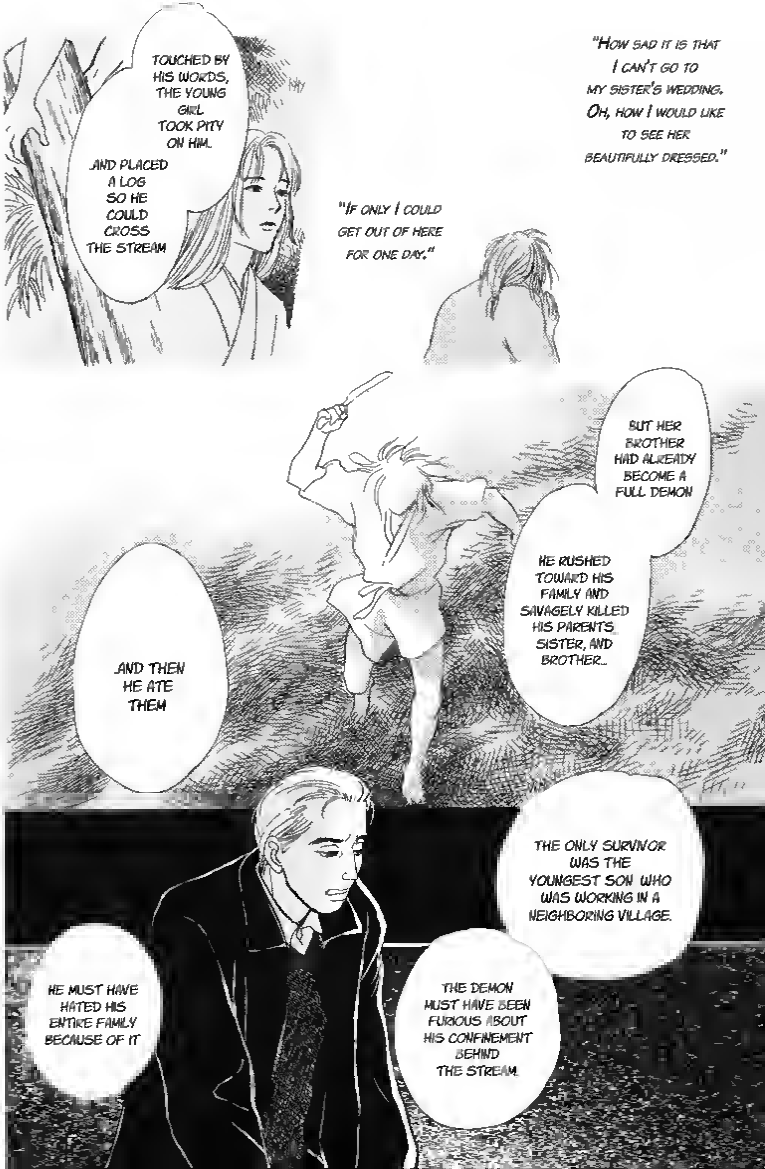

I KNOW I HAVE AN IMPORTANT TASK.
I HAVE TO GET BACK THERE IN ORDER TO REMEMBER IT
LOOKS IMPOSSIBLE. YOU'D BETTER ACCEPT IT AND BEHAVE LIKE A NICE LITTLE STONE.
NO WAY!
I'm not going to stay a stone forever!
I must get back to Haru!
WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN INTO NOW?
HEEEEEEEEEP!
BARK BARK-!
STOP, HARU!
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?
BARK-!
HUH?
WHERE DID THIS STONE COME FROM?
I WONDER HOW IT GOT HERE.


EXCUSE ME IS ANYONE HOME?
Toss
Y-YES, I'M COMING
OUCH!
REALLY, SHE WASN'T VERY GENTLE WITH ME.
I'M HOME!
MOM WHERE'S THE MINIATURE GARDEN?
OH, SOMEONE CAME TO PICK IT UP FOR AOYANAGI-SAN
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE LITTLE STONE?
WHAT? WHO?
A MONK.
HE SAID AOYANAGI-SAN GAVE HIM OUR ADDRESS
I'M GLAD WE GOT RID OF THAT GARDEN


EXCUSE ME.
I'M TELLING YOU, I'M NOT A STONE!
I'VE FOUND YOU A NICE SUNNY SPOT NEXT TO THE ENTRANCE. I'M SURE YOU'LL LIKE IT
...AND THAT'S THE STORY
WHAT?
NO...
DID YOU ASK HIS NAME?
IS ANYONE HERE?
WHY DIDN'T MOM ANSWER? DIDN'T SHE HEAR HIM?
YES, I'M COMING
HELLO. I'M AOYANAGI. THANK YOU FOR THE OTHER NIGHT
I THINK I FORGOT SOMETHING HERE. SO I CAME BACK TO GET IT


WHY DIDN'T HE COME TO THE FRONT DOOR?
THE MINIATURE GARDEN?
SOMEBODY ALREADY CAME TO PICK IT UP FOR YOU
WHAT?
BUT I DIDN'T ASK ANYBODY TO DO THAT!
DO YOU KNOW WHO IT WAS?
WELL...
PLEASE!
THAT THING IS TERRIBLY DANGEROUS. I HAVE TO GET IT BACK!
YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?
AH, I OWE YOU THE TRUTH
ONE OF MY FATHER'S FRIENDS FOUND THAT BOX IN HIS SHED
HE GAVE IT TO ME A MONTH AGO IF I HAD KNOWN WHAT IT WAS, I NEVER WOULD HAVE ACCEPTED IT


THE MINIATURE GARDEN IS CURSED.
THE LANDSCAPE AND BUILDINGS REALLY EXISTED
TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPENED THERE.
ONE OR TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, A DEMON CHILD WAS BORN
EVEN AS A YOUNG CHILD HE WOULD ONLY EAT FRESH MEAT HE KILLED BIRDS AND SMALL ANIMALS AND ATE THEM RAW
AS HE GREW OLDER, HE BEGAN KIDNAPPING AND EATING CHILDREN
HIS PARENTS BUILT A HUT COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY A STREAM
THE BOY WAS AFRAID OF WATER, SO HE COULDN'T GO BEYOND THE STREAM.
EVERY DAY, HIS SISTER BROUGHT HIM FOOD
EVENTUALLY, THE GIRL WAS OLD ENOUGH TO GET MARRIED THE DAY BEFORE HER WEDDING...


"How sad it is that I can't go to my sister's wedding. Oh, how I would like to see her beautifully dressed."
"If only I could get out of here for one day."
Touched by his words, the young girl took pity on him.
And placed a log so he could cross the stream
But her brother had already become a full demon
He rushed toward his family and savagely killed his parents, sister, and brother...
And then he ate them
The only survivor was the youngest son who was working in a neighboring village.
He must have hated his entire family because of it
The demon must have been furious about his confinement behind the stream.


IT'S WEIRD.
DIDN'T THE PERSON WHO CAME HERE GIVE HIS NAME?
MAYBE HE LEFT A VISITING CARD?
HIS SPIRIT IS LIVING IN THAT MINIATURE GARDEN
HE IS STILL CRAVING BLOOD AND LOOKING FOR HIS YOUNGEST BROTHER
I HAVE THE FEELING THIS ISN'T THE SAME PERSON AS THE OTHER NIGHT.
OR AT LEAST HIS ADDRESS?
SOMETHING THAT WOULD ALLOW ME TO FIND HIM.
PLEASE,
ANY DETAIL.
AOYANAGI-SAN.
SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR GLASSES?
HUH?


WHAT—
SWISH
WHIP!
WAH!


POOF
I GUESS I SHOULD THANK YOU, BUT...
...WHY DID YOU LET HIM ESCAPE? HE'LL COME BACK FOR SURE. HE WANTS HIS GARDEN BACK.
HUH?
NOW HE'S GONE.
YOU SEE. I'M HERE WHEN NEEDED
WHY DID YOU GIVE MY MINIATURE GARDEN TO A STRANGER?
WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE? DO YOU REMEMBER?
ER, NO... SORRY
AH HAH! A SUSPICIOUS FELLOW.


...
BONK
OUCH!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE YOUNG MASTER'S ROOM?
WH-WHAT ABOUT YOU?
It helps you let off steam.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
BAM!
BONK!
BONK!
OUCH!
OW!
DAMN IT! HERE I THOUGHT I'D GOTTEN A GREAT MEAT LOCKER
I DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO BACK TO NOW AM I CONDEMNED TO REMAIN A STONE?
I THINK YOU'VE GROWN AGAIN SINCE YESTERDAY


Roar
I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT!
THAT CANNIBAL DEMON MUST GET HIS POWER FROM THE MINIATURE GARDEN
THAT'S THE KEY WE HAVE TO GET IT BACK.
DID YOU LOSE SOMETHING?
COOL, WHITE TAIL!
THIS RETRIEVER WORM WILL TRACK THE MISSING ITEM AND LEAD US RIGHT TO IT
WAKE ME UP WHEN HE FINDS IT
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME!
RITSU, HURRY AND EAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE.
1cm


THE POLICE REPORT THAT PRINTS FROM THE MUTILATED LEFT HAND FOUND IN SAKAE CITY...
I DIDN'T SLEEP WELL.
YAWN
AGAIN? ASK YOUR GRANDMA TO DRIVE YOU
INVESTIGATORS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND ANY CLUES WHICH WOULD LEAD THEM TO THE MURDERER
IDENTIFIED VICTIM
AOYANAGI KOUJI-SAN
...BELONG TO AOYANAGI KOUJI SAN 31 YEARS OLD
AT THAT TIME, THE VICTIM REPORTED THE DEATHS TO THE POLICE AFTER RETURNING HOME FROM WORK.
JUST ONE MONTH AGO, HIS ENTIRE FAMILY WAS MASSACRED IN ASAHI MACHI
THE VICTIMS FATHER ICHIROU-SAN; MOTHER YOUKO-SAN AND SISTER KUMIKO-SAN..
AS FOR AOYANAGI SAN HE DISAPPEARED RIGHT AFTER HIS FAMILY'S FUNERAL.
WERE HACKED TO DEATH BY SOMEONE USING A MACHETE


SO DID YOU FIND IT WHITE TAIL?
Flap
Flap
YES, IT'S IN THIS TEMPLE.
THE YOUNG MASTER IS STILL AT SCHOOL
HE WON'T BE BACK UNTIL THIS AFTERNOON LET'S MAKE PREPARATIONS.
Bring Bring
I'M BACK.
STAY WHERE YOU ARE.
YOU CAN'T ENTER THE TEMPLE LIKE THAT YOUR ROBE IS SOILED
Plop
Flop Flop


YOU GUYS ARE TOO MUCH
Hmph.
THIS MONK IS SKILLFUL.
OUR MARK WAS DETECTED.
ACK! HE'S BURNING HIS CLOTHES.
Crackle


HEY!
AS FOR THE STONE JUST PUT IT IN THE HALL CASE CLOSED!
I KNOW! THE NEXT TIME THE DEMON SHOWS UP JUST LEAD HIM TO THE TEMPLE.
UNLESS YOU WANT TO EXPLAIN IT ALL TO HIM
WE CAN'T GO THERE AND ASK THE MONK TO RESTORE IT.
JUST TO REMIND YOU, THAT GARDEN ISN'T REALLY OURS


IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.
HE COULD HAVE ATTACKED ANYONE HERE, BUT IT SEEMS LIKE HE'S ONLY AFTER RITSU.
HEY. DON'T TRY TO GET THE JUMP ON ME BLACK TAIL.
Transformation
I'LL FOOL THAT MONK AND GET THE GARDEN BACK.
LEAVE IT TO ME YOUNG MASTER
I CAN HELP, TOO.
Transformation
OH.
IT COULD WORK FOR BLACK TAIL, BUT YOU.
CITY WOMAN
PRINCESS
GEISHA
I CAN CHANGE TO SOMETHING ELSE IF THIS ONE ISN'T GOOD
FEMALE?
YOU— YOU'RE A FEMALE?


THAT MONK BETTER BE NICE, OR I'LL EAT HIM!
I THINK I'D BETTER GO
No way!
Hahaha
I'LL GO
STOP FOOLING AROUND!
THANKS FOR THE EFFORT, BUT THAT WON'T WORK
TRAVELER!
PLEASE! TAKE ME WITH YOU!
Exorcism Purification Rituals
Inquire at the reception desk.
-Ewshouji
?
WE'RE HERE
I THINK YOU GREW SOME MORE.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GRADUALLY ADAPTING TO THIS WORLD.
WAHH!



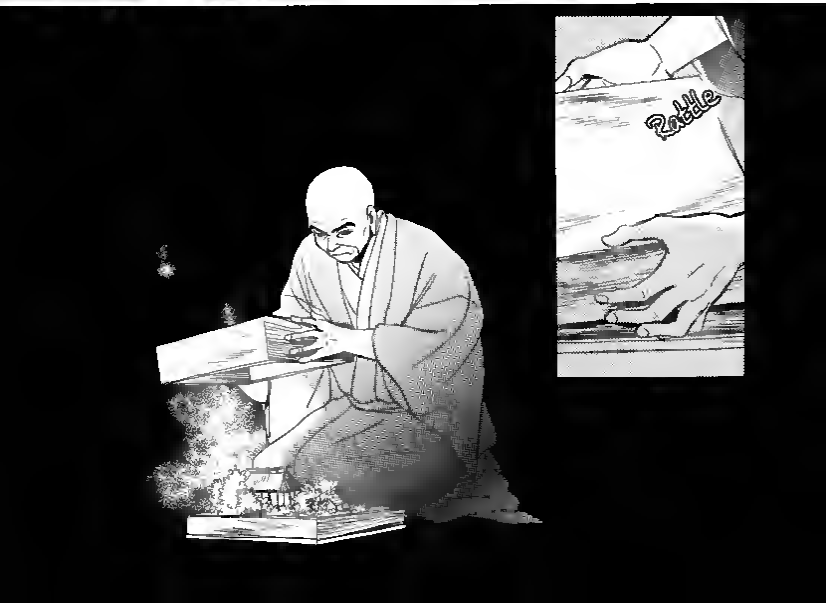
*Youkai henge = shapeshifters


SORRY TO INTRUDE. I'M IIJIMA.
EXCUSE ME.
HE SAW THROUGH US AT ONCE.
UM…
YOU.
WHAT, GAN!? I TOLD YOU TO GET OUT!
DO YOU HAVE SOME TIME TO SPARE FOR ME?
THAT'S HOW I GOT YOUR ADDRESS
AOYANAGI-SAN CALLED ME BEFORE HE DIED
WHAT A MESSED UP ROOM
?
Dirty Fake
I'M THE ONE HE WAS SUPPOSED TO GIVE THAT MINIATURE GARDEN TO
風水
陰陽道
道教入門


OUT OF THE QUESTION!
THAT BOX BELONGS TO OUR MASTER NOW GIVE IT BACK TO HIM.
Never!
I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY HE HAD DOUBTS.
THE POOR MAN WOULD STILL BE ALIVE IF HE HAD BROUGHT IT TO ME EARLIER
HE SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED ME MORE
YOU LOUSY MONK!
IF YOU DON'T OBEY WE'LL USE FORCE!
HELP US, YOUNG MASTER! WE CAN'T MOVE!
PLEASE EXCUSE THEM. THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO BEHAVE.
ASSOCIATING WITH YOUKAI IS NOT RECOMMENDED, YOUNG MAN.
YOU'RE GOING TO SHORTEN YOUR LIFESPAN.
HMM.


I FEEL A STRONG SPIRIT WATCHING OVER YOU.
SO YOU HAVE A PROTECTOR?
ALTHOUGH IT'S EVIL.
I'M GOING TO PURIFY IT AND SEAL IT IN THIS TEMPLE FOREVER
BUT, UMM.
THE THING IS, I NEED IT TO—
URG
IT WILL NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY AGAIN!
BUT—
DON'T INSIST!
ANYWAY, I CAN'T HAND OVER THIS GARDEN TO A TEENAGER
I'VE MADE MY DECISION
WE'RE DONE HERE GOOD-BYE!
THIS OBJECT HAS TO BE KEPT AWAY FROM HUMANS.


THAT MONK REALLY WOULDN'T LISTEN.
GIVEN HIS PERSONALITY, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN USELESS TO INSIST.
I HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY OF PRESSURING HIM.
WOW, IT'S REALLY DARK.
HMM?
GRRRR
No, yours!
It's all your fault!
ALAS! WHAT WILL BECOME OF ME?
WHAT ABOUT ME?


Rattle


HEY CANNIBAL OGRE.
IT'S TIME TO END THIS
YOUVE STOLEN TOO MANY LIVES.
THIS MINIATURE GARDEN IS SO DANGEROUS
HUH?
THERE'S...
NOTHING INSIDE.
Tap Tap


OH, NO!
EEK, HE'S MAD!
RUN, YOUNG MASTER!
THIS BAG IS SLOWING ME DOWN!
AH!
SMACK!



*Juushoku: head of a Buddhist temple


YOU EVIL YOUKAI!
I'M GOING TO EXORCIZE YOU!
WHACK!!
WHOA! ANOTHER DEMON!
HMPH
NOW, WHO'S MORE EFFECTIVE?
THE CORPSES OF THE AOYANAGI FAMILY MEMBERS...
WERE IN A TERRIBLE STATE
THE INFORMATION WAS WITHHELD FROM THE PUBLIC, BUT THEIR BODIES WERE PARTIALLY EATEN.
SORRY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT...
JUUSHOKU?


WHAT THEY ALL HAVE IN COMMON IS THE NUMBER FIVE THE VICTIMS ARE ALWAYS TWO PARENTS AND THREE CHILDREN
IT'S ALMOST CERTAIN THERE ARE OTHER CASES WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT
IT REPEATED 38 YEARS AGO WHEN A FAMILY OF FOUR WAS MURDERED
THE DAY AFTER, THE NEIGHBORS' SON WAS KILLED
THERE WAS A SIMILAR CASE 60 YEARS AGO
FIVE MEMBERS OF A FAMILY WERE MASSACRED ONLY AN INFANT WAS LEFT ALIVE.
IN THE ONE 38 YEARS AGO, THE FAMILY ONLY HAD FOUR MEMBERS. SO TO BRING THE COUNT TO FIVE THE NEIGHBOR BOY WAS KILLED
IN THE CASE FROM 60 YEARS AGO, THE YOUNGEST CHILD WAS SPARED
WHEN I FINALLY FOUND IT, IT WAS AT THE AOYANAGI'S
I TRIED TO CONVINCE THEM TO GIVE IT TO ME, BUT THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE ME.
THAT'S NOT ALL. AFTER SOME INVESTIGATION, I LEARNED THAT EACH FAMILY HAD RECEIVED A BEAUTIFUL MINIATURE GARDEN
I DECIDED TO SEARCH FOR IT IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME.


I GUESS THEY DIDN'T LISTEN...
I SPECIFICALLY WARNED THEM NOT TO PUT IN A BRIDGE.
I WAS ABLE TO TAKE A LOOK AT IT, AND I NOTICED AN EVIL PRESENCE IN THE HUT ISOLATED BY THE STREAM
PANICKED HE TRIED TO GET RID OF THE GARDEN, BUT IN THE END HE WAS KILLED, TOO
IF THIS CASE IS LIKE THE OTHERS, THERE'S STILL A MISSING VICTIM
THERE WERE ONLY FOUR PEOPLE IN THE AOYANAGI FAMILY.
OBVIOUSLY, THE DEMON HAS DECIDED YOU ARE TO BE THE FIFTH ONE.
AND SO ANOTHER TRAGEDY TOOK PLACE.
THREE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY DIED
KOUJI'S LIFE WAS SPARED ONLY BECAUSE HE WASN'T HOME AT THE TIME.
LUCKILY, HE IMMEDIATELY THOUGHT OF REMOVING THE BRIDGE
THE BEST THING TO DO IS REMOVE THE BRIDGE ONCE HE GOES BACK TO THE HUT.


I HOPE YOU'LL SURVIVE, TOO
BY THE WAY THE INFANT WHO WAS SPARED SIXTY YEARS AGO WAS ME
A POWERFUL GUARDIAN PROTECTS YOU, SO I'M NOT TOO WORRIED.
BUT IF YOU EVER NEED HELP, I'LL BE HERE.
THANK YOU.
BLUE STORM?
IT'S ABOUT TIME THAT STUPID MONK WENT AWAY
Boo!
How can we help?
ME, TOO! I WANT TO GO!
THE ONLY WAY TO END THIS IS FOR ME TO ENTER THE MINIATURE GARDEN AS BAIT
CAN YOU TAKE ME THERE?


LET'S GO.
A STONE, HUH. I'M NOT SURE.
DID YOU HEAR? YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE HIM TOO?
TAKE ME! I CAN HELP!
AND HERE.
THEN WE'LL CALL YOU ISHI*
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
I DON'T RE MEMBER
*Ishi = Stone
INJIMA RITSU
RITSU
THANKS A LOT WHAT'S YOUR NAME AGAIN?
INJIMA RITSU..


THUD!
Wah!
DON'T BE AFRAID, IJIMA RITSU FOLLOW ME


BLUE STORM?
SWISH


I'M THE ONE WHO CREATED THIS MINIATURE GARDEN
I DEVOTED MY BODY AND SOUL TO IT
IN A WAY, BUDDHA PUNISHED ME BY SEALING ME IN IT.


AH!
THE CHARACTER ON YOUR FOREHEAD!


WHEN THE CANNIBAL COMES, FIND A WAY TO LURE HIM TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE.
I'LL HIDE HERE, AND THE MOMENT HE CROSSES OVER, I'LL REMOVE THE BRIDGE.
THAT SOUNDS NICE AND ALL BUT WILL HE SHOW UP THAT EASILY?
DO I HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL HE COMES?
WHERE IS BLUE STORM, ANYWAY?
Hey
THERE YOU ARE! YOU'RE NOT ON YOUR OWN TIME, YOU KNOW
SORRY, SORRY I WAS HUNGRY SO I WENT AHEAD—
YOU'RE NOT... BLUE STORM


RUSTLE
IJIMA RITSU!
I'M COMING, RITSU!
SLASH
OOPS.
I TOOK OUT THE BRIDGE. GET BACK OVER HERE!

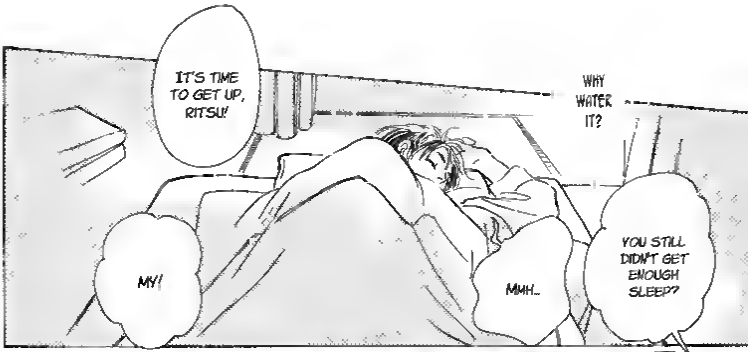

GROAA...
STAB!
HE CUT OFF MY HEAD!
CRAP HE DOESN'T FEAR ME ON HIS TERRITORY
YOU'RE USELESS!
QUICK, RITSU! RUN!
URRGH!


WOOM
BURNING
FLAMES
SLAM!
CHIRP CHIRP


LONG AGO THE VILLAGERS FOUND THE CANNIBAL HERE.
AND BURNED THE HUT
I'M SORRY, BROTHER
GO TO HEAVEN THIS TIME.
HIS FATE WAS TO PERISH WITH THIS HUT
MY NAME IS SABUROU I WAS HIS YOUNGER BROTHER.
I MADE THIS MINIATURE GARDEN SO OUR FAMILY'S SOULS COULD REST IN PEACE.
HE DIDN'T KILL ME BECAUSE I WAS WORKING AS AN ARTISAN IN THE NEIGHBORING VILLAGE.

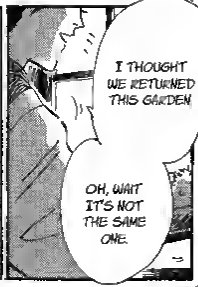

I ONLY INTENDED TO PRAY FOR MY FAMILY
I DIDN'T KNOW IT WOULD LURE EVIL SPIRITS AND BECOME SUCH A DANGER
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.
IT'S ALL RIGHT WE'LL RESUME THE CULTIVATION IN THE BACK FIELD
FORGIVE ME. I COULDN'T SAVE YOU.
THE BACK FIELD?
IT'S TRUE.
THERE WAS A FIELD IN THE BACK OF THE HOUSE.

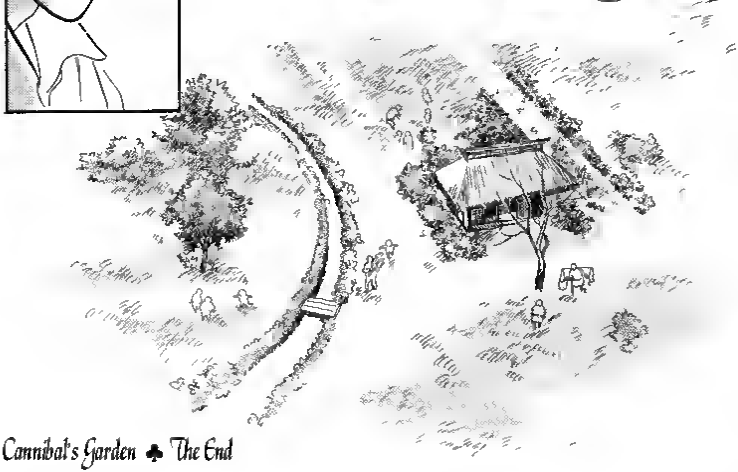

IT SEEMS I STILL HAVE TIME LEFT TO LIVE. I'LL BECOME A MONK AND SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE HELPING DEAD PEOPLE FIND PEACE.
EH, THAT FAKE MONK AGAIN?
CAN I KEEP THIS?
OF COURSE.
PUT IT IN A SUNNY PLACE AND WATER IT FROM TIME TO TIME
WATER IT?


IT'S TIME TO GET UP, RITSU!
MY!
MMH..
WHY WATER IT?
YOU STILL DIDN'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP?




WHERE DID YOU GET IT? IT'S MUCH MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE OTHER ONE!
KUH?

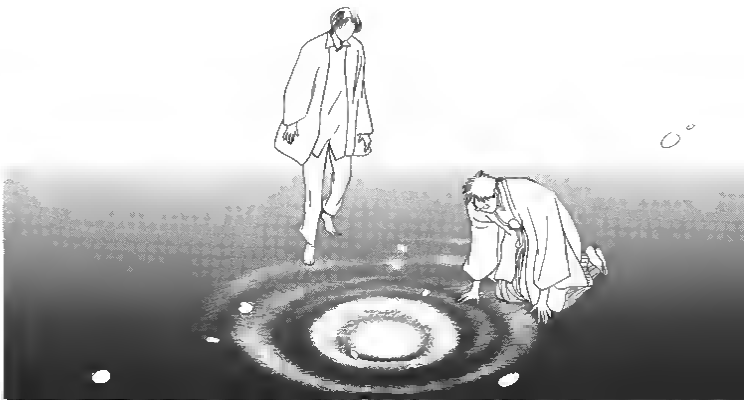

I THOUGHT WE RETURNED THIS GARDEN.
OH, WAIT IT'S NOT THE SAME ONE.



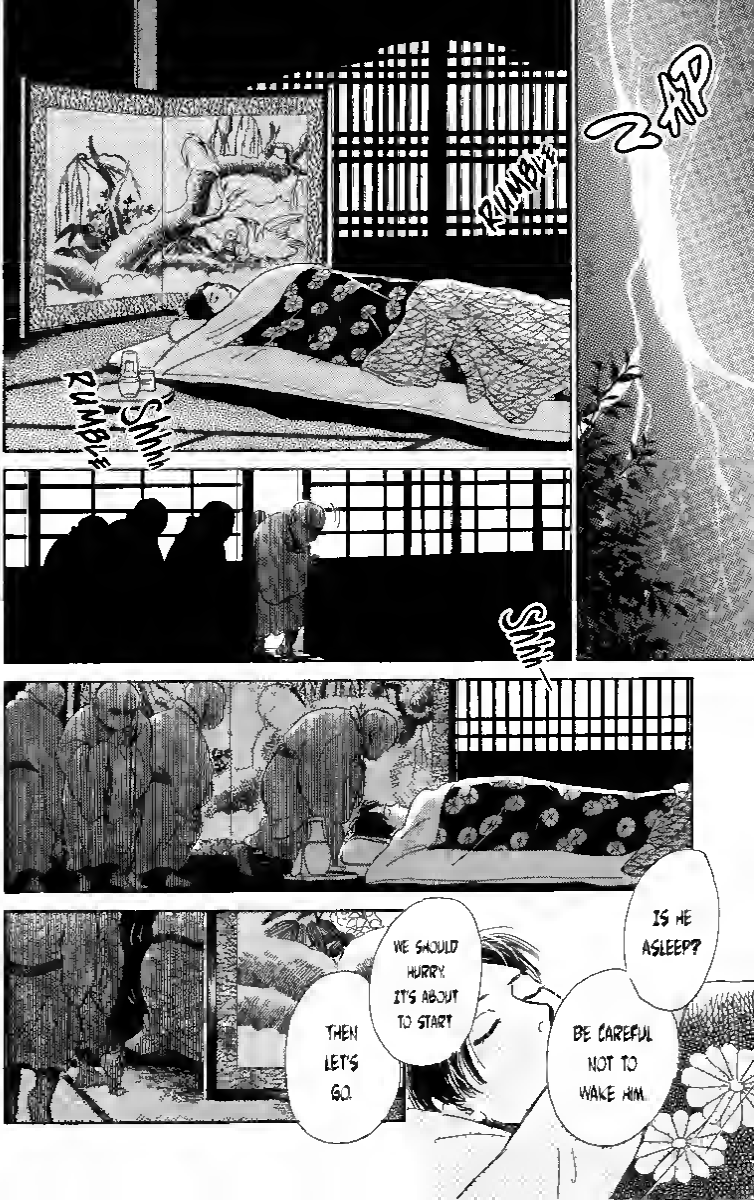

The Screen on a Stormy Night

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YOU'RE BACK!
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO PALE?
COUGH
MY HEAD FEELS A LITTLE HEAVY
I THINK I HAVE A COLD
IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE OF ALL THE COLD WEATHER LATELY.
Are you OK?
AND NOW THAT I'M WEAK THE DEMONS ARE MERRILY SWARMING ALL OVER ME.
SWARM
GO AHEAD AND GO TO BED. YOUR GRANDMA AND I ARE GOING OUT TO THE THEATER, AND WE WON'T BE HOME UNTIL LATE.
MY FUTON IS ALREADY PREPARED
TAKE SOME MEDICINE AND GET SOME REST
38.7 DEGREES.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST SLEEP IN MY ROOM?
Shhh
Shhh


ZAP
RUMBLE
Shhh
RUMBLE
Shhh
IS HE ASLEEP?
BE CAREFUL NOT TO WAKE HIM.
WE SHOULD HURRY. IT'S ABOUT TO START
THEN LET'S GO.


3AP
RUMBLE
I CAN'T SLEEP WITH THE SOUND OF THUNDER IN MY HEAD
AH. JUST STOP.
RATTLE
RATTLE
WAHA HAHAHA
MOM AND GRANDMA SHOULD STILL BE OUT.
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
CLACK
HAHAHAHA
VOICES COMING FROM BEHIND THIS SCREEN?
CHACK
RUSTLE
CLACK
WAHAHAHA
WAHAHAHA
CLACK
CLACK
WAHAHAHA
CLACK CLACK
HAHA


Ahhhhhh
Click
Click
Click
Click
Click
Ahhh!!


HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
Grab


DEMONS!
THERE ARE DEMONS PLAYING MAHJONG BEHIND THIS SCREEN?!


GREAT LORD, THIS HUMAN BOY BARGED IN HERE.
OUTRAGEOUS! HOW DARE HE TRY TO SNEAK IN.
WELL, YOU CAN EAT HIM TO SATISFY YOUR HUNGER
I JUST ATE A KING BULL, SO I'M REALLY NOT HUNGRY
BUT A LITTLE SNACK WOULD BE GOOD.
I'LL JUST TAKE THE HEAD
WHOA!
OUCH!
MY HEAD...
GREAT LORD, WAIT A MOMENT
IF I WEREN'T SO WEAK
I'D BE ABLE TO ESCAPE
PLEASE, I ASK THAT YOU NOT EAT HIM!
THIS BOY IS ONE OF MY SERVANTS


THIS GUY IS HUMAN...
THIS! I LEFT THIS HANDKERCHIEF BEHIND!
HE'S YOUR SERVANT?
YES, I ASKED HIM TO GET ME SOMETHING I FORGOT.
YES, OF COURSE.
UNACCEPTABLE! HOW COULD YOU BRING AN OUTSIDER FROM THE HUMAN WORLD? IF HE'S YOUR SERVANT, HAVE HIM SIT QUIETLY OVER THERE.
UM... WHAT DID I DO?
I'M JUST AN ORDINARY PERSON. I DIDN'T KNOW I WOULD BE EATEN.
YOU HAD ME WORRIED. SO, BOY, HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO GET HERE?
THAT... MADE ME BREAK INTO A COLD SWEAT
UNDERSTAND? I'M GOING TO FINISH MY GAME WITH THOSE DEMONS.
WELL, YOU CAN'T GET AWAY NOW, SO BE GOOD AND SIT THERE PATIENTLY.


AFTERWARD, I'LL GET YOU BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM.
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
YES.
THESE PESTS ARE ALL OVER YOU.
OK, TURN AROUND A MINUTE.
AH!
THAT'S...?
FEEL BETTER NOW?
I'VE RE-COVERED...
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
HURRY UP!
WHO IS THAT PERSON?
WHAT'S HE HIDING INSIDE HIS RIGHT SLEEVE?
IT'S STARTING!
I'M NOT SENSING IT'S ANYTHING BAD, WHATEVER IT IS.
WHAT COULD HE HAVE STASHED IN THERE?


I DON'T WANT TO KEEP PLAYING JUST FOR FUN. WHY DON'T WE MAKE IT A LITTLE MORE INTERESTING?
AH!
THERE, I WIN!
BLAM
OH, FORGIVE ME. I COULDN'T DO THAT.
BESIDES, MY SERVANT WOULDN'T BE GOOD TO EAT.
HOW ABOUT IT? WHY DON'T YOU WAGER YOUR SERVANT OVER THERE!
WHY DON'T I WAGER MYSELF INSTEAD?
IN RETURN, WE'LL WAGER SOMETHING YOU WANT.
VERY WELL. A PERSON WHO CAN TRAVEL HERE FROM THE HUMAN WORLD... IS BOUND TO TASTE DIFFERENT FROM ORDINARY MEN.
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US?


SOMETHING THAT CAUGHT MY EYE AWHILE AGO
THAT WHITE HERON OVER THERE.
YOU HAVE SHARP EYES. THAT'S A PRIZE I CAPTURED AT A POND ON MY WAY HERE.
IN HER ORIGINAL FORM, SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN!
SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE OUT OF DESPAIR
I CAPTURED HER JUST AS SHE WAS ABOUT TO FLY OFF IN HER HERON FORM
DON'T BE A CHEAPSKATE, SETSUKI! SINCE WE HAVE SUCH A PLUCKY FELLOW HERE, WHY DON'T YOU GO AHEAD AND AGREE TO THE WAGER?
OK, OK. I WILL!
IT DOESN'T MATTER I WILL WIN, NO MATTER WHAT.


WILL HE WIN?
Clang
HE'S AGREEING TO SUCH AN OUTRAGEOUS BET.
WHAT'S HE PLANNING?
IF I LOSE, I WILL ALLOW MYSELF TO BE EATEN.
HOWEVER, YOU MUST ALLOW MY SERVANT TO RETURN HOME.
IF IT'S A DREAM, I WISH I'D HURRY UP AND SNAP OUT OF IT.
I JUST KNOW I'LL GET EATEN TOO IF HE LOSES
AH!
RON!
THIS SURE LOOKS LIKE THE BACK OF THE SCREEN AT HOME. WHAT'S GOING ON?
IS THIS JUST A DREAM I'M HAVING BECAUSE OF MY FEVER?
?
I GOT FOUR HUNDRED POINTS.
THIS GUY IS SO BRAVE AND HAPPY-GO-LUCKY.
IS CONFIDENCE ENOUGH TO WIN?
THUMP THUMP
Pow!
I CAN'T SEE IT.
BOY!


BOY, THERE IS SOMETHING I HAVE TO TELL YOU.
SETSUKI IS CHEATING
THE WHITE HERON IS SPEAKING.
OH RIGHT, SHE USED TO BE A HUMAN.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW? LOOKS LIKE I WIN AGAIN.
Ha ha ha!
Rustle
Shuffling
IF THIS GOES ON, YOUR MASTER WON'T WIN. I WANT TO HELP YOU.
HERE, TAKE THIS AND SNEAK OVER THERE.
TRY CHECKING OUT HIS SLEEVES.
HE'S HIDDEN EXTRA TILES IN THERE.
Grab
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?


I'M GOING TO TEAR YOU INTO EIGHT PIECES AND EAT YOU RIGHT NOW!
BRAT!
DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO STAY OVER THERE?
OH, GREAT LORD, PLEASE FORGIVE MY SERVANT'S MISTAKE.
EVERYONE KNOWS YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN CHEATING
I'M SURE YOU JUST PLACED THOSE IN THERE FROM AN EARLIER HAND AND FORGOT TO TAKE THEM OUT!
MY SERVANT JUST MIS-UNDERSTOOD THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
HOW COULD SOMEONE AS GREAT AS KING SETSUKI NEED TO CHEAT AGAINST A LOWLY HUMAN OPPONENT?
ME, CHEAT?
OF... OF COURSE NOT!


KMPH!
I... I PUT THEM IN THERE WITHOUT THINKING.
Swish
THANKS.
POK
CHU
HOW MUCH TIME HAS PASSED?
POK
TICK
Clock
PICK!
HE'S DOING BETTER THAN BEFORE.
BUT HOW DOES HE EXPECT TO WIN LIKE THIS?
HOW COULD YOU WIN WITH SUCH A SHITTY HAND?
I'M SORRY.
Swish



*Tsumo – winning after drawing a tile


OH... TSUMO AGAIN I'M SO SORRY...
GROWWW!
Rumble
Damn my stomach
GROWWW!
I REALLY WANT TO EAT HIM, RIGHT NOW
MY LUCK IS STEADILY IMPROVING.
CHAM
OW!
SURPRISED
YOU!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, HANGING AROUND BEHIND MY BACK?
STOP WANDERING AROUND!
YOU'RE SCATTERING ALL MY LUCK!
GO OVER THERE.
YOU USELESS THING!
SWISH!


THROW YOURSELF INTO THAT CORNER AND STOP BOTHERING US!
Poc!
Click...
HUH?
ANY MORE OUT OF YOU, AND I'LL EAT YOU HERE AND NOW!
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!
SNISH
WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW?
Bam
Thrrow
GRUMPH
TACK
THAT WAS REALLY STRANGE. IS THAT MAN REALLY HUMAN?
PLEASE SPARE HIM HE'S JUST VERY STUPID
RON!
BLAM!


GREAT DEMON LORD, VICTORY IS MINE!
HOH! IT'S ITSU, MONZEN, NAKU, DORI!..
AND MANGAN. EIGHT THOUSAND POINTS!
BUT HE WON.
THIS GUY— AT THE VERY LAST MOMENT!
YOU AREN'T PLANNING ON WINNING AND RUNNING, ARE YOU?
WAIT A MINUTE!
TH-THE NIGHT IS ALMOST OVER I HAVE TO BE GETTING HOME.
HOW ABOUT WE WAGER SOME GOLD THIS TIME?
SO, AS WE AGREED, I WILL BE TAKING THE WHITE HERON.


HOW ABOUT THIS? I'LL COME BACK TOMORROW AND PLAY AGAIN
THAT SOUNDS FINE. BUT YOU MIGHT NOT SHOW UP
TO MAKE SURE YOU COME BACK, YOUR SERVANT IS STAYING HERE!
MY SERVANT HERE IS A VORACIOUS BEAST.
IF I TAKE MY EYES OFF HIM FOR A MINUTE...
HE'LL EAT YOU, STARTING WITH YOUR HEAD.
AH, I CAN'T ALLOW THAT!
NONSENSE! HOW COULD THIS SMALL HUMAN EAT SOMEONE LIKE ME?
THEN LEAVE BEHIND ONE OF YOUR EARS!
DON'T YOU KNOW? HUMANS ARE TERRIFYING!
HOLD ON! IF I GO HOME WITHOUT AN EAR,
MY MOTHER WILL NOTICE, AND I'LL GET IN A LOT OF TROUBLE.
TAKE SOMETHING LESS VISIBLE.
HERE...


I HAVE SIX FINGERS ON MY RIGHT HAND.
WHOA! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
I DIDN'T NOTICE THAT!
HO HO. THERE ARE VERY FEW HUMANS WITH SIX FINGERS.
THIS EXTRA FINGER IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME, BUT IF I LOSE IT, IT WON'T BE EASILY DISCOVERED.
I WILL LEAVE THIS SIXTH FINGER HERE.
GOOD. I AGREE.
THAT'S HOW IT WILL BE!
STEADY NOW!
SLASH!


I'LL KEEP THIS SO YOU WILL RETURN TOMORROW.
Sprout
Twitch
Twitch
HUH?
WHA?!
Shmp
ROAR!
Crunch
AHHHH


CHOMP CHOMP
THIS IS EMBARRASSING. IT'S LIKE I SAID, IF YOU AREN'T CAREFUL, THIS SORT OF THING HAPPENS.
IT'S EATING ONE OF THE LITTLE DEMONS!!
IF A SINGLE FINGER IS THIS VORACIOUS, LEAVING AN ENTIRE MAN BEHIND WOULD BE DISASTROUS.
WE WOULD ALL BE EATEN
HUMANS ARE A TRULY TERRIFYING RACE.
THE DEAL IS OFF TAKE YOUR PRIZE AND GO HOME!
ha
DON'T EVER COME BACK!
THINGS WENT VERY WELL. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP
YOU ARE—
UM…


WELL, TODAY YOU ATE YOUR FILL.
WE'RE GOING HOME.
...BLUE STORM.
WELL, LET'S GO.
EVERY TIME IT EATS A DEMON, IT GROWS
BLUE STORM?
IT'S A SMALL BUT POWERFUL DEMON I SUMMONED.
USING A SPECIAL TECHNIQUE.


COME, YOU CAN RETURN WITH ME
WHY DID YOU DO THAT, RYOU-SAN?
WHEN YOU WAGERED YOUR OWN LIFE, I COULDN'T REMAIN IDLE AND NOT HELP YOU
I HAD RESIGNED MYSELF TO BEING EATEN BY THOSE DEMONS.


HE IS THIRTY YEARS OLDER THAN ME. TWICE MARRIED, AND A LOAN SHARK.
IF I GO BACK, I WILL HAVE TO MARRY THAT MAN.
I'D BE BETTER OFF DEAD
I DON'T REALLY KNOW HIM, BUT IS IT FAIR TO JUDGE HIM JUST BY HIS APPEARANCE?
EVEN YOU AGREE HE'S A FAT OLD MAN
NEE-SAN, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DIE OVER THIS.
YOU'VE ONLY MET HIM TWICE. IT'S POSSIBLE HE'S A GOOD MAN.
AUNT AND UNCLE HAVE SOLD ME OFF TO COVER THE PRINCIPLE OF THEIR DEBT.
NOBODY'S ON MY SIDE.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU, TOO, WOULD SAY SUCH THINGS.
IT'S ALSO POSSIBLE WE WILL NEVER DEVELOP THOSE FEELINGS. THAT WOULD BE HELL ON EARTH.
ONCE TWO PEOPLE LIVE TOGETHER, IT'S POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO DEVELOP FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER.
PLEASE DON'T SAY SUCH A THING.


NEE-SAN, DON'T SAY SUCH THINGS
ANY CHILD OF HIS WOULD BE DISGUSTING JUST LIKE HIS FATHER
THAT CHILD WOULD BE MY NEPHEW OR NIECE
IT WOULDN'T BE LIKE THAT IF YOU WERE TO HAVE A CHILD IT WOULD BECOME A WARM, HAPPY FAMILY
I WON'T HAVE A CHILD WITH THAT MAN!
Hey!
Hey—
I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY ONE FEELING TERRIBLE.
...DON'T CRY.
RYOU-SAN...


IF HE IS ALLOWED TO MARRY YOU HE WILL BE VERY HAPPY
LOOK, EVERYONE IS DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR YOU.
THAT MAN IS THERE, TOO.
Hey!
Hey!
Hey
WILL HE BE HAPPY MARRYING A GIRL WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE ON THE EVE OF HER WEDDING?
IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, HE IS STILL WILLING TO MARRY YOU.
HE DEFINITELY LOVES YOU, NEE-SAN.
AND WE CAN TRY TO WORK SOMETHING OUT.
IF THE MARRIAGE IS NOT HAPPY, RETURN HOME.


I AM SUCH A COWARD.
I DIDN'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO GO AGAINST MY AUNT AND UNCLE, AND I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO HELP NEE-SAN.
I'M DRAGGING HER BACK INTO A SITUATION SHE KILLED HERSELF TO ESCAPE.
UM.
IT'S STILL BETTER THAN DEATH, RIGHT?
IT IS BETTER.
AS LONG AS A PERSON IS ALIVE.
THERE IS STILL THE POSSIBILITY FOR GOOD THINGS TO HAPPEN.
YOU'RE RIGHT. THANK YOU.
I'LL WORK HARD TO REALIZE THEM.


ARE YOU READY TO GO?
WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
UM... FROM THERE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
I HAVEN'T HAD THE PLEASURE OF KNOWING YOUR NAME.
IT'S... IIJIMA, RITSU
IIJIMA?
I HAPPEN TO BE IIJIMA, TOO.
ARE WE RELATIVES?
RITSU... THAT'S A GOOD NAME.
GOOD-BYE.


RATTLE
RATTLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
BETWEEN THE SCREEN AND THE WALL...
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
WE'RE BACK, RITSU.
THERE'S EVEN LESS ROOM FOR A MAHJONG TABLE
MY FEVER'S GONE.
...THERE'S OBVIOUSLY NOT ENOUGH ROOM FOR PEOPLE TO WALK
WAS IT A DREAM CAUSED BY THE FEVER?



The Screen on a Stormy Night ♣ End


Adventures in the Night
EVEN AT 1:00AM THE CONVENIENCE STORE HAS MANY PEOPLE INSIDE.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GUESS, BUT THIS STORE CLERK MUST HAVE A LOT OF REASONS TO BE WORKING HERE AT THIS HOUR.
AND WHY IS THIS APPARENTLY HAPPY COUPLE HERE?
WHAT ABOUT THIS STUDENT? MAYBE HE'S HIDING A CORPSE IN HIS CLOSET.
SHE'S A MANGAKA WHO HASN'T COME UP WITH A STORY EVEN THOUGH THE EDITOR IS ABOUT TO COME CALLING FOR DRAFTS.
SHE'S THINKING OF JUMPING IN A CAR AND TRAVELING FAR AWAY FROM HERE OR ESCAPING TO ANOTHER COUNTRY, OR BETTER YET, GETTING MURDERED... IF YOU KNOW OF A SERIAL KILLER READY TO HELP...
AS FOR THIS MANGAKA WHO KNOWS WHAT KIND OF DEEP TORMENT SHE'S IN?
NOBODY WOULD KNOW JUST BY LOOKING BUT THERE IS A FILM CASE TUCKED AWAY IN THE JACKET
INSIDE THAT CASE, IS A NEWLY LAID PINCH EGG


THE BEAKS OF WHITE TAIL AND BLACK TAIL ARE WHITE, WHEREAS THE BEAKS OF FINCHES ARE RED
AND THESE ARE FINCHES.
THIS IS WHITE TAIL AND BLACK TAIL
THEIR SIZES VARY ABOUT THIS MUCH
FINCHES DON'T TRANSFORM AT NIGHT.
WHAT IS THIS THING?
WARRRG
I'M GOING TO SLEEP!
FINCHES ARE BORING.
THEY DON'T DRINK WINE, AND THEY CAN'T TELL STORIES.
THE FINCH WON'T WARM THEM UNLESS THERE ARE AT LEAST FIVE OR SIX
It's dark. I need to get back.
Oh, no!
IN ORDER TO HAVE THE EGGS HATCH AT THE SAME TIME
BETWEEN AUTUMN AND SPRING A FINCH LAYS EGGS, ONE A DAY, UNTIL THERE ARE SIX OR SEVEN.
Oh.
THUMP
THUMP


NO, NOT YET
MOM CALLED ME
ARE YOU WORKING RIGHT NOW? HAVE YOU THOUGHT UP ANY INTERESTING STORIES YET?
air holes
film casing
cotton cloth
This is a method an expert sent to me by mail I am very thankful
BECAUSE OF MY HEN-LIKE NEED TO CARE FOR THE EGG, I STICK IT INSIDE MY JACKET
If it's protected from the cold, won't it hatch earlier?
But if it gets cold, won't it die?
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IF YOU CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING?
IT SOUNDED SIMPLE BUT IT WAS ACTUALLY A VERY DIFFICULT QUESTION I COULDN'T ANSWER IT. SHE SHOULDN'T BE ASKING ME. SHE SHOULD BE ASKING THE EDITOR.
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IF YOU CAN'T THINK OF ANY GOOD STORIES?
...
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN?
I CAN'T...
I CAN'T...
I CAN'T...
I CAN'T...
I CAN'T...
DAMN... IT'S DAWN AGAIN
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
THAT'S WHY AT ONE FORTY IN THE MORNING WITH AN EGG TUCKED INTO MY JACKET, I FOUND MY WAY TO THE NEARBY CONVENIENCE STORE.
NEED A CHANGE OF SCENERY I'M GOING TO BUY SOME ICE CREAM.


CHANGE THE WATER, AND ADD MORE FOOD
I SWEEP THE PORCH,
AT DAWN I BECOME THE JANITOR AT THE CAFETERIA
Swish Swish
Broom
Dustpan
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SUNRISE.
YET ANOTHER NIGHT HAS PASSED DURING WHICH I MADE ABSOLUTELY NO PROGRESS.
Chirp Chirp
Sparrow Cafeteria opens for business. 5:00 AM
AND IN THIS WAY OVER AND OVER, AND DAY AFTER DAY, I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO COMPLETE THIS SECOND VOLUME
...GO TO SLEEP?
WHY NOT...
Ability refreshed
I'VE BEEN DRIVING MYSELF INSANE, BUT I STILL HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF ANYTHING.
Chirp Chirp
TO ALL OF MY READERS, TO ALL THE EDITORS, AND TO ALL MY ASSISTANTS, I THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
Please continue to look after me.
Hama-chan, thank you
Fukushi-san thank you
Washimbe-san, thank you.
Rie-san, thank you.